

9 771745 916017

ISSUE 20 NOV/DEC 2008

£3.73

# LITTLE WHITE LIES

*Truth & Movies*

Arta Dobroshi

Chuck Palahniuk

Alex Gibney

Terence Davies

Jessie Buckley

Kim Ki-Woo

Michael Fassbender

## The Silence of Lorna Issue

Deconstructing  
The Dardennes



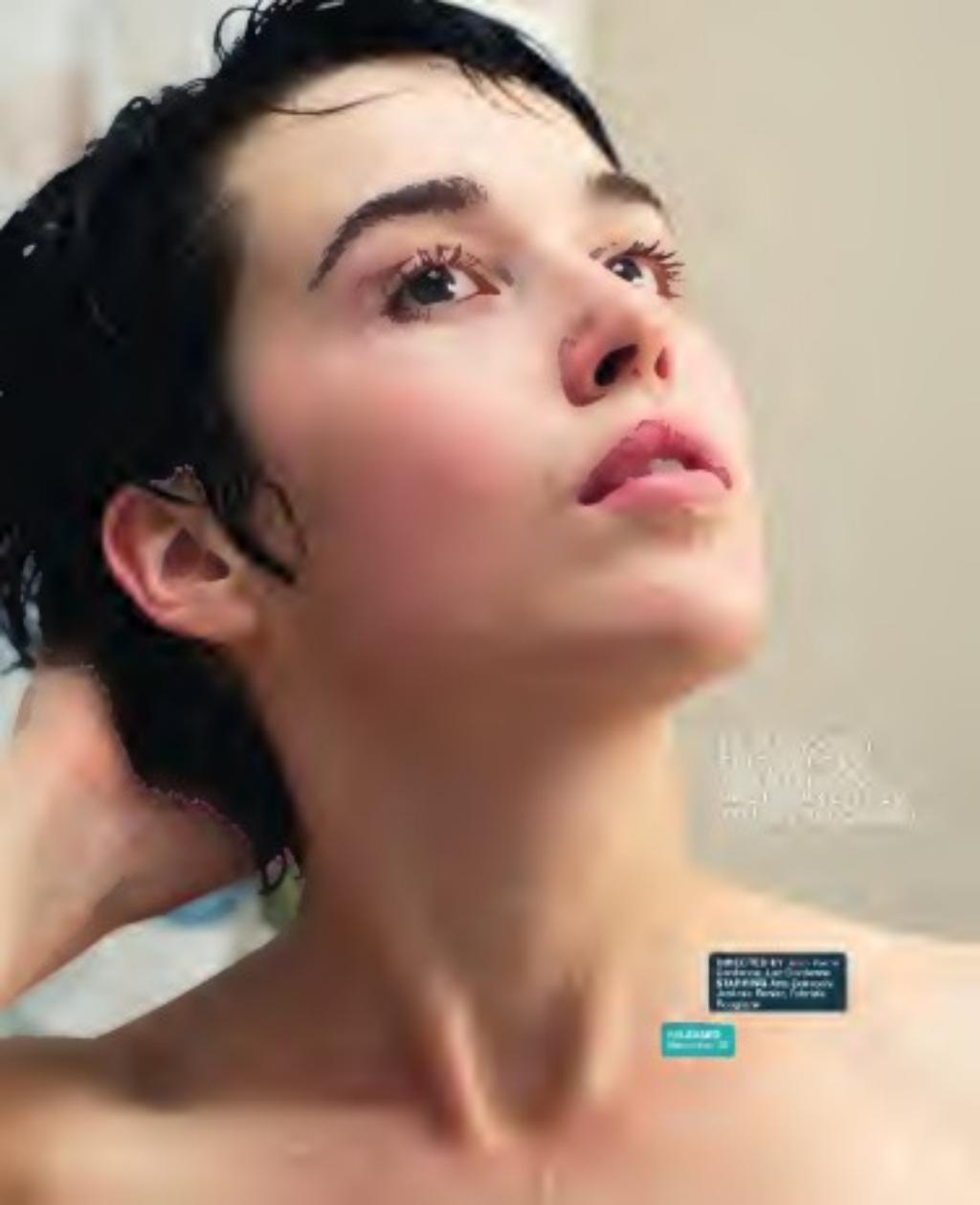
A black and white illustration featuring a repeating pattern of stylized faces and buildings. The faces have large, dark, almond-shaped eyes and are surrounded by intricate, swirling floral and leafy patterns. Between the faces are small, rectangular structures with a grid-like pattern, resembling traditional buildings or windows. The entire design is rendered in a high-contrast, graphic style.

"THAT'S  
THE CORNA  
I REMEMBER."

ART BY PAUL WILLOUGHBY  
THE SOURCE OF CORNA BY  
MATT BOCHENSKI

CHAPTER ONE  
In which we discuss  
the Silence of Lorna.





PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREA GÖTTSCHE LOWE  
STYLING AND PROPS ANDREA RENNER; FEDERICO RONCHETTI

WILLIAMS  
MATERIALS 38



**J**n the end, it always comes back to the beginning. In *Rosetta*, it's the moment-by-moment struggle for survival. In *The Son*, it's a ghost returned from the past. In *The Child*, it's the bond between mother and son. In *The Silence of Lorna*, it's a fistful of money. It belongs to an Albanian immigrant, Lorna (Arta Dobroshi), and this opening frame signals that here is a film in which economic reality will have the final, sorry say; where Lorna won't fall out of love, she'll go out of business.

Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne are back on the grim, grey streets of Liège, shooting what Truffaut once called the inverse of the first-person singular where ethics and aesthetics combine to portray a bleak vision of modern life.

*The Silence of Lorna* is a pitch-black fable about the dehumanising effects of life in the new Europe, an economic experiment in which the poor are left to fight for survival. It returns to the motifs that the brothers have been exploring since their 1999 drama *I Think of You*: the self-love and desperation of poverty, the impossibility of love, the inability of society

Despite a recent surge of pretenders to the throne – Ulrich Seidl (*Happy End*), Lukas Moodysson (*Lydia* director), Theodore Angelopoulos (*The Sleeping Meadow*) and the like – there's still no one quite like the Dardennes. And if it's not exactly a barrel of laughs, nor is it worthy liberal cinema. The Dardennes don't make films that feel elegantly satisfied with their powers of empathy. They write the narrative like a romance, showing with a precision and urgency that makes their work as much an instinctual as an intellectual experience.

And though there is much in *The Silence of Lorna* to tie it to their previous films, there is also a more profound sense of moral ambivalence that sets it apart. The Dardennes make trajectory films, in which the struggle for survival affords small moments of spiritual grace. Often this experience is painful – in *Rosetta*, it's only in the film's final instant that Grégoire (Guillaume Gouix) literally and metaphorically picks off his knees. In *The Child*, Bruno, the gentle and misguided father, takes anguish steps from adolescence to adulthood, but won't reflect on the journey until it's already too late. ▶





The Silence of Lorna maximizes this trajectory. When we first meet her, Lorna looks an unlikely subject for the life-lessons needed her way. She has savings, a boyfriend, the dreams and delusions of a normal. Ms. She is well equipped to succeed in a harsh and unfriendly world, because she is tough and unyielding herself.

Lorna has been brought to Brussels by Fabio (Flavio Parente), a small-time hustler who moves Belgian women to Russian businesses in order to acquire legal papers. To get her own papers, she's been hooked up with a Belgian junkie, Claudio (Jérôme Renard), whose death is the only thing standing in the way of the score.

As Claudio, Jerome Renier has taken Branc and imagined a life in which all his lessons remained unlearned. It's a life in which the mistakes got incrementally worse until he found himself alone and addicted, big good looks strung out nothing. But like Bruno, Claudio is an innocent at heart, drawn by instinct he can't control. Lorna respects him, waiting and hoping for Claudio to DO so her life can get underway, but as he struggles against addiction, Lorna's conscience is pained, and it's here that her story is turned on its head.

Compunction will be her undoing. In a touching scene in the hospital where Claudio is recovering from his withdrawal, Lorna stares at him,

silently slumped, perhaps seeing her own vulnerability reflected in his. She is securing tissues for widow and redeemer: "Let me sleep, Claudio!" Lorna begs him in an early scene that tragically foreshadows the film's conclusion. But in the savage universe conjured by the Dardennes, goodness is weakness. In reaching out to Claudio to save him, Lorna will also bring him – her friend, bland silence is the future to whom Claudio (if Fabio will kill him whether he survives his addiction or not).

Her complicity is disguised by a brutal transition. As Lorna sets through Claudio's few, pathetic possessions, it looks like a loving domestic act. But then the truth is revealed – Claudio has been killed, casually, off-camera, tossed away like a piece of rubble. It's an astoundingly cruel summation of the value of his life, and points in a very to one of the problems with the film.

The Dardennes may be humane, but there's a vein of ugliness in The Silence of Lorna that makes you wonder if they care for the character so much as you will. Call it "real life" if you like, but at times their choices beat not just on the fleshy, but the sordid. There are two big narrative shifts which are unwound with such perverse timing that it's less an emotional juxtaposition than victimization. Perhaps it's a mark of the film's success that you feel for Lorna as she's buffeted by these cosmic gales, but as she's slowly stripped of illusions, then possessions, then dignity, then sanity, she becomes an uncomfortably voyeuristic experience.



That the film doesn't tip-over completely into melodrama is due largely to the Dardenne's signature style. The handheld cameras, the natural lighting and ambient sound all keep the narrative anchored in reality, however horrific and unrelentingly dolorous it may seem. It's an affecting, almost artless style that's nevertheless predicated on pinpoint accuracy and exhaustive discipline. It brings their documentary roots, but it's also a very rigid style that sacrifices the richness of visual metaphor for a more literal approach to narrative.

If its visual depth you're looking for then issue into the eyes of Arta Dobrović. The Dardenne's wish bring us now here to the screen, but the sense of expectation can't detract from the fact that Dobrović is sensational as Lorna, channeling an reservoir of primal energy to sustain a performance of raw intensity. Lorna goes through a spectrum of experiences, but the constant thread is a kind of existential vulnerability that Dobrović's fluid, boyish frame perfectly captures. Despite her magnetic attractiveness, who conveys the anguish of a woman who has lost her place in the world. "Do you remember me?" she asks a nurse in the hospital. "And my husband?" With her sense of self stripped away, Lorna exists only as otherwise see her – in their eyes, but not her own. From here, her life spirals rapidly out of control, stripped of everything except guilt; her own silence amplified by the emptiness inside her. Staggering through a forest, she cuts a grim figure. We

some named Red Riding Hood alone in the huntmaster's cottage. It's here that Cindy will finally let her sleep – and no nightmare could be worse than those that lie ahead.

And it's here, too, that the silence the Dardenne are pointing towards hits home. For people like Lorna, the economic migrants drifting through this new, borderless Europe, there is no home, there are no roots, there is no history and no ultimately there is no voice. Just silent, lonely suffering. ■

**Anticipation:** Europe's modern existence and consequences of course. That is what cinema is made for. **Re**

**Recognition:** Increasingly bleak but profoundly moving with a timeless central performance. **Fear**

**In Retrospect:** Smart, unphilosophical, multi-dimensional and weirdly courageous – this one to reward many times. **Re**

Take a trip to page 33 for an interview with Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, and page 38 for an interview with Arta Dobrović.





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and grow with their ideology, thoughts and dreams.  
It must connect and develop the cities in them. Are  
we to give voice and singer to a movement where the  
masses of workers and peasants will look back to us?"

Professor Raul Rivero



## CHAPTER TWO

*(in which we introduce  
ourselves.)*

LWLiess:

What is it you love about movies?

Jean-Pierre Jeunet:

I don't know. To work together. It's something we've done for so long, we don't know how to change. It's teamwork. It's when you see some characters that really exist, come to life, and surprise us. Because they're human beings.

Arta Dobroshi:

About movies? I didn't expect that you were going to ask me this question. I love acting, really - I never thought what it is that I love about movies. When I started acting I thought it began to be my passion and that I didn't even have time to think, "What is it that I love?" because the emotion got me.

So far for me it was the energy, to tell a story. For example, after somebody sees your movie they come out full of emotions, they want to hug you - so you really did give them a little story with lots of emotions. Maybe sometimes you learn something and sometimes you learn nothing but you can summon emotions.

Ramen, pleasure and amazement.



Publisher  
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[www.ramenpublishing.co.uk](http://www.ramenpublishing.co.uk)



Editor  
Matt Edwards  
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Creative Directors  
Kai Langford & Paul Walloughby  
[www.ramendefusion.com](http://www.ramendefusion.com)



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Made with the support of the UK Film  
Council's Publishing for Publishers Fund.



UK FILM COUNCIL  
LOTTERY FUNDED

*LIFE* was published in winter prior  
Issue 10, *The Idiot* of *Literary* Issue  
November/December 2008

ISSN 1745 8188

Mode is a paper from sustainable sources.

Published by  
Story Publishing  
50-104 Castle Lane  
London EC1A 1AR  
+44 (0) 207 729 0711

Distributed by  
COMBO! Special  
Dynamik Works  
Derrick Road, W14 8TQ  
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the third finger. Laughing, crying, racing  
and fighting with you till all the way  
down. That make you not feel you  
are alone Bruce Willis and John Travolta  
would they were your interpreters.

Walter Olmos

I think they give us something to move  
in people's lives, with how they move,  
in other ways, but not those  
bravery, emotion or applied their  
abilities and results, go places.  
I'd never seen and cannot say if like  
would a whole lot bigger down the

Alden Ehrenreich

From the beginning I get when characters from the screen  
or my living room and everywhere else because the  
everythings about as large. Knowing that it comes  
back or as well as somewhere else, because sometimes  
that's doesn't bring someone else's life. You would  
like to escape, in the moment by yourself also want's  
particular, in a person's dimension. It is the one  
to whatever you want to do, and every time to like  
how something the closing credits and feeling yourself  
ending like a whole situation.

David del Rio

It aren't exactly you're bringing down,  
change your life, make you alone, make you  
alone, bring you together, tell you story,  
to express you, under, heart, flowers, music,  
drama, joy. Movie's feeling emotions.

Bruce Dern

Close the ability to create something  
magical, inspiring and out of the  
ordinary to make you form a clear  
individual, in a life of limitations,  
there are some in movies.

David Denos

The collective experience of the dreams of the  
million year old deer, young is able to be walking  
back before a film starts, wanting to be carried off in  
the whims of another's imagination and the dreams  
that always be interesting.

Mark Whaling

# What do you love about movies?

Since issue #3 of *ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY*, we've asked the actors and directors of our  
cover stories what it is that they love about movies. Their answers have  
been thought-provoking, inspiring, creative—and occasionally bizarre.  
To celebrate our twentieth issue, we asked you, our readers, the same  
question. Here are some of the best responses:

Cancer has a unique ability to affect the Flamboyant's audience on so many levels, and particularly on an emotional level. Flamboyant has a desire for symbolic meaning; whether it's being caused by a child, implying no child or being caused by a thought provoking message. I love this because they can change people, and there are few things and few opportunities as truly made out to consume you have an interest in and change like any deep book or film completely.

Flame are an expression, an interaction, a communication and an exchange.

#### Leaf Pattern

It's a choice to withdraw. You can leave from other people's expression, and hopefully avoid similar situations, me. And it's also me leaving, as of course, as I might prove in a different world, a different dimension, a different time zone.

#### Leaf Clipping

There had a certain formula that happens every year and again when it all comes together, and you help this year even though out of your wonder.

Or is that power?

Jesse Card

Instead I thought I was a more  
magnificent actually. I prefer to run my way  
in the sun because it burns less and it's  
easier to pick up a girl when you talk about  
yourself than about her own experiences.  
In the country for old life when what  
you do is your stage because on  
your shoulder.

Eric Bana

I think the logic of dreams points out the insecurities of Street and that's why we have the many instances of reaching in,  
like to keep my hands. There's smoking and such substances  
and my family running for the audience story. There's also  
sex, a really sweet expression of beauty, and something very  
mean in the light in the scene and the music in my mind for our  
inseparable friends. It's always go ahead by means of courage  
new people and places. There's the picture of someone taking out  
the soap suds and changing my perception and thoughts. There's the  
shaved length amongst friends, the before shaving of faces, and  
the off stage we try to take from many instances. There's the hope,  
drama, frustration, anger, violence and relief they make us feel at  
deeply intensely managed in my instance. There's that, even if the  
music's a terrible, you can't move or ~~play~~ move with your heart  
firmly. I love the idea of culture step they and without really  
conscience shared, sometimes enhanced, to another culture the  
old, bright angle and movement with reality.

Morris Kagle

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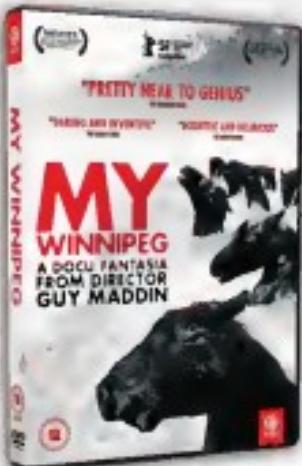
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## CHAPTER THREE

In which we discuss  
themes of uncommon  
interest inspired by  
our feature film.

# THE BROTHERS GRIM

LWLIES TRAVELS TO LIEGE TO SPEND A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE BARDEUNNE BROTHERS

Words by James Fenton  
Photography by Paul Wiegert



It seems a suitably grey day to meet the Dardenne brothers. Léon is overcast, caught in a dull light that pales all colour to the washed palette of their films. Characters from an unshot production people the streets, wearing the well-worn clothes and worn-away faces of hardship. If it is, if you'll excuse the cliché, a bit grim.

It's only natural to expect the Dardenne brothers to be sombre. While their films are full of warmth for the hidden and fundamental goodness of humanity, their dramatic concerns remain overwhelmingly sombre: their characters caught on the margins of society when morality is challenged by necessity. It's a pleasant surprise to find that they are such good company.

Jean-Pierre Dardenne is more physically expressive than his younger brother Luc, frequently breaking into a grin that's equal parts generous, sly and conspiratorial. His tongue is often on display – in his cheeks, pushing his mouth out like salivary glands. Luc is more sedentary, his eyelids drooped, head dipped, gazing up through drowsy eyes at the world's troubles. But as he talks, he returns to the task, becoming even more animated than his brother.

Besides dabbling on features, the Dardennes make some 60 documentaries which, like their fiction films, examine the working lives of the people of Liège. What if anything did the experiences teach them? "That everything is possible, which isn't true when you're making documentaries," answers Jean-Pierre. "We like to take a film to wherever we want to, but in a documentary you have to go to certain places. In fiction you have more freedom, more liberty. But when we shoot our films we still give ourselves the obligations that perhaps another director wouldn't, which has helped us as a kind of discipline when shooting."

This obligation – to the scrupulous reconstruction of reality – is hardly new.

The Dardenne brothers have been compared to Robert Bresson: Mike Leigh and Roberto Rossellini, who Luc describes as their "model". But in truth, the Dardenne brothers gradually ditched a unique style that borrows heavily from both documentary and fiction. Their technique appears at first documentary but in fact accentuates subtlety: the cameras clinging to the key characters' shoulders in artificial ambience, a sharp contrast to the wall-hugging objectivity of traditional documentary.

What's interesting to consider is whether their films would have even more power if they were still making documentaries. "Our [fiction] films have more power," argues Luc. "They can reach the truth that we wouldn't be able to with documentary. Documentary is also committed. There are places you can't film. There are things you can't do. If you are filming a documentary you would never be able to film someone planning or committing a murder. There are lots of things that would be forbidden to film. Like a company laying off employees. With fiction you can enter a secret; you can go into things you wouldn't be allowed to in real life. With a documentary you can too, but there are restrictions. You can only reach for the truth."

"Lies'n'truth wouldn't be possible in documentary," adds Jean-Pierre. "What would be possible is to meet someone which gone through the same experience as Léon, but after it's happened." So the transition to fiction is about "exceeding restrictions"? "Pretty yes," he agrees. "In documentaries we did direct people in a social sense, and the people didn't always agree with what they were asked to do. So it's easier to work with actors."

"What annoys me is when they manipulate people in documentaries," continues Luc. "It's normal that you trouble people to make you really think you believe. What you see in documentary isn't really the truth. It's an effect so we can understand one another without actually speaking – saying the words. It's an understanding without words, a dumb contract. When you film something, words aren't necessary, the spectator can understand without being told that what they see happened. Now in documentaries what they do is manipulative and move things much more dramatic than they probably were – more emotions, more situations. That's the problem we had when shooting documentaries because we didn't want to force people to do things they didn't want to do."

While the Dardenne may have made the leap from documentary to fiction, they have remained similarly committed to their hometown: Léon's relevance is *The Burning City* ("Le Creux Ardent"), inspired by its smelting landscape of forges and smokestacks. The first industrialised area of continental Europe, it grew rich from an abundance of water, coal, iron and labour. The urban valley – the "Bastille of Wallonia" – became one of the most important centres of steel production in the world. Today following decades of industrial decline, *The Burning City* might just as well apply to the furnace of tensions that fuel the Dardenne brothers' films – unemployment, poverty, stagnation. ▼





"IT'S BETTER TO WORK FOR YOUR MONEY THAN BEG. IT'S DEGRADING. ALWAYS HAVING TO ASK FOR SOMETHING."

In particular, the Dardennes have concentrated their stories in the working-class district of Charleroi, which has suffered particularly badly from the decline of the city's steel industry. Charleroi's recent problems are nicely illustrated by Luc who, when asked how to pronounce the name correctly, suggests "Senneguy" ("Syringe"), illustrating the pun by placing one hand on his arm and mimicking a jumble shooting up.

"This is where we spend our time, even though there's nothing very fascinating about it," offers Jean-Pierre. "For a good 30 years it's changed, lots of factories have closed and no lots of characters from our films appeared due to this. They probably already existed before but they weren't in films. Even if our films are more interested in the characters than the decor, we show that too."

Even before de-industrialisation, Liege's identity was complicated by the geography and history of Wallonia, the south Belgian district of which it is part. Positioned on the political, cultural and linguistic borders of Germany, France and Holland, its identity defies the simplifications of national boundaries. "As this is where you're born, where we live, it's difficult to take a step out of and see what the true characteristics really are," continue Jean-Pierre. "We're a bilingual part of the country, even trilingual. German, French and Dutch. Here we speak French. But it's not our country; it's not a French history, it's a different history."

"If we really have to say, we would say that the firms are made in Wallonia, from Wallonia - with the people working in the factories here. We're not from the big city in the town where we went to school, so when we make our films we think about the people we've met," says Luc.

"The stories we tell, maybe *The Silence of Lambs*, could be told anywhere in the West, in Europe," adds Jean-Pierre. "In a rich country where everyone foreign wants to come thinking that things might be better. It's not particular to Belgium. The welcome here isn't better than other countries."

Is it worse? "Not worse than in France," he says. "Not worse than in Holland. I don't know about England. There's no anti-immigrant campaign here like the one in England with the Polish people, though there is an extreme right movement in the Flemish part of the country."

Immigration has occurred as a theme in the Dardennes' films but it is less an issue per se than a means to explore the essential motifs of identity and recognition. Similarly, recurring Dardennes abominations of inebriated, petty crime and manual labour seem less important than the iteration these narratives signify - from childhood innocence to adult responsibilities. In this sense, even parenthood is a manual job. Indeed, it's a dramatic interest that borders on the obsessive. "We're not sure if we're observational," comments Jean-Pierre. "It's true that in our films all the characters have manual activities, but this is also to relate to the characters in terms of what we are them doing, in terms of gesture, rather than what the characters actually say."

Brussels-based film historian Wouter Hassels has described the role of workplaces in the Dardennes' films as signifying "a common piece of microscopy", but its hard sometimes to tell if labour should be seen as dignifying - as giving freedom - or as limiting freedom and making an dependent. "It is a way of being recognised for all people. Of integrating into society," explains Luc. "For parents, unemployment can bring shame in not being able to provide for your children. It can give you an image that you wouldn't otherwise have. But labour can also be a constraint and make you suffer. It's complicated, complex. It's like Ophélie, the daughter in *The Kids*, who teaches the boy. When you have a job you're worth something. Because you know how to, you have a job."

"It's better to work for your money than beg," suggests Jean-Pierre. "It's degrading always having to ask for something. Solidarity of the workers brings them together so they can seek for better working conditions."

"In India today they killed their lions because they were all fed off," continues Luc. "I don't think they should have done it but that shows the need to have a job."

But that doesn't mean that everybody wants to work. In *The Child*, Bruno, played by Janneke Reinier, contemplatively announces that "only laziness works". "Well, sleeping is also a job. But you need no insurance and if you get shot you have no dole money," deadpans Luc. "Religion makes you believe in labour as mission. But it's not. It's a collective way of transforming something into something else. It's the real punishment for man. In a psychiatric hospital where people suffer from depression, work is a way to make them feel better." ▼

And where, then, does the leave the brothers politically? "More Left than Right," says Jean-Pierre, "but there's something about the Left that's destructive. They always feel that they are right. Lots of people on the Left are cynical and don't feel guilty about anything."

"There's Left and 'Left,'" suggests Luc. "We need a positive conception of the state. We criticize income tax but it provides solidarity, the freedom to do things. But they have to do it to defend it. They have to show things in a positive way. To regulate the market in the name of social solidarity."

The Dardenne's protagonists are notably almost always herd-worshippers, single-minded in their pursuit of a paying job – no matter how risqué – and protective of something usually someone. This responsibility is often driven as much by obligation as by love or faith: Igo in *The Promises*, driven by guilt and goodness to protect a dying man's wife and baby; Rosette caught between contempt and concern for her alcoholic mother; Gérard monitoring the boy who killed his child; and Léonie from apart by her sense of convenience and her conflicting feelings for husband Claude.

This is a dramatic universe populated by decent people thrown in the shit and trying – desperately – to earn. Even Bruno, who commits the ultimate betrayal by selling his own child, is offered the chance of redemption. For all that their films are an echo chamber for the breakdown and hostility in the world, the Dardennes are always striving to find the good in people. "It is very important that we love all our characters," agrees Jean-Pierre. "It doesn't mean that we agree with everything they do, but we have to give them all the richness you find in a human being, even though they're bastards. We spend a lot of time with them. For the actor it's the same thing. Fabrice, who plays Félix [in *The Silence of Léonie*], he has to like Félix or else it won't be a character. They give the main character the possibility of change. No because something else. They're not alone in the world."

"In Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom*, you like the main character. The guy who kills women while filming. When the film came out a lot of people thought it was disgusting, immoral," says Luc. "But that was great; we're not there for morals. We're there to try and understand a human being: why he would kill. I loved this character because in reality I would stop him. It helps us as individuals because we're also implicated, but as filmmakers in particular."

"It gives the spectator possibilities," continues Jean-Pierre. "Léonie is a spectator while she is also in fact an accomplice. Equally, the spectator goes through things that normally they wouldn't do in real life. If the spectator was there in real life, they would go and warn the person that someone was going to get killed. But in the film you can be with her, relate to her."

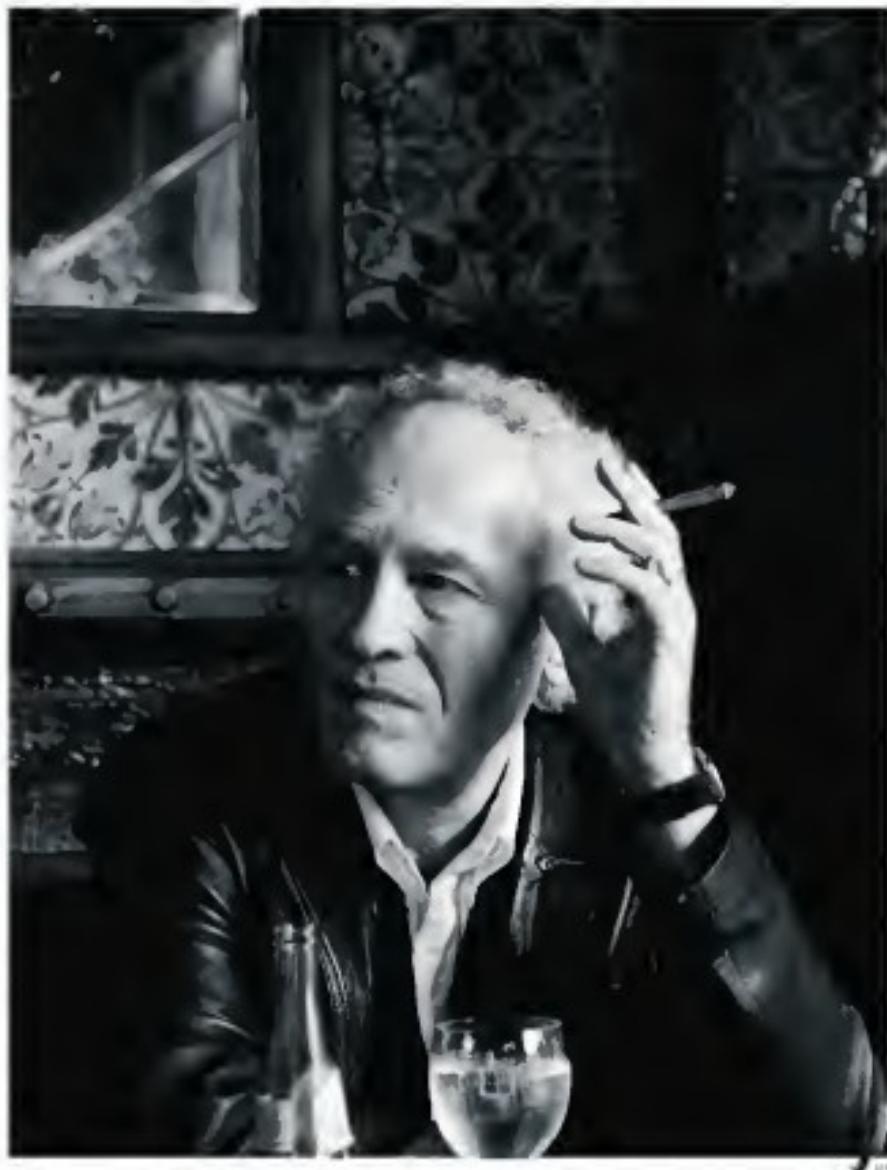
There are any number of repeated motifs in the Dardenne's films, but two seem particularly redolent of their substrate. One, used in *Rosette*, *The Child* and *The Silence of Léonie*, is a scene where the protagonist crosses a motorway.

"In *The Child* the motorway represents the border between countries," explains Luc. "Benoit crossing the road with the body of Bruno is to create danger. So the spectator is scared. And for Léonie we want to put other people around her who ignore her secrets and the way she thinks. To give more relief to her secrets. She's a woman who likes the night, only a little light. The truth is that we like that image of people crossing the road with truths. We all try to cross it now, we all try to survive. Life is real life. It's a picture of life, it represents life."

"We're putting them in dangerous situations," offers Jean-Pierre. "When we shoot, we try to make the traffic drive as fast as it normally would, to get that feeling, to threaten more danger. If we really let it go free we'd have an accident. With the truths, they are really scared. We try not to show that we are controlling the traffic so that everyone has that sense of danger."

In addition to conveying danger and establishing a symbolic border the recurring motorway motif draws an implicit connection between vulnerability and poverty. The characters in the Dardenne's films are almost always on foot, walking or running from place to place. When, as with Igo in *The Promises* or Bruno in *The Child*, a character owns a means of transport, it is relished as something luxurious and liberating. On foot the character is reduced to a childlike, even primal state. When Rosette crosses the motorway she scampers, head down, pitiful and desperate. ▼

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A similarly recurring motif is that of the principal character burying objects in the earth – Rosetta with her few savings stuck in the ground under a trailer and her precious tools: encrusted in a concrete pipe, or Jgor burying the wallet he has just stolen from an elderly woman. On its simplest level this is an obvious metaphor for the Dardenne's narrative preoccupation with secrets and lies. "That's the way that our films are made," says Luc. "There's always something hidden. There's always a concrete reason for them to say that whatever you see, you can't see everything there is. For instance, Amélie's funeral [in *The Piano*]. That's the way the world is. A buried body, some kind of guilty secret, a feeling of shame."

But these "gestures", as the Dardenne brothers might call them, communicate something far more complex. When burying their secrets, the Dardenne brothers always do it barehanded, with no ceremony, reaching straight down and digging into the bare earth – depositing their secrets like a cat guilty of burying its own shit.

This symbolism is shadowed by a miss-en-scène that includes the earth, the grass, the semi-urban landscape of verges, bridges and underpasses as discrete scenes. On these margins – moral, social, physical – the Dardenne brothers attempt to balance with dignity, like Rosette fishing in the city river with a bottle. Somewhat, this intuitive sympathy for the sensual experience of their characters seems to transcend the very cold, the smell of grass and smoke, the touch of water or earth to an extent unparalleled by their contemporaries in social realism.

They repeatedly use not just the same actions (most obviously Olivier Gourmet and Jeanne Hervé), but the same crew (including DoP Alain Marcoen and editor Marie-Méline Doco), who form part of what they happily term their "family". "We can really talk to them; which means we're not there to protect our own image, we're there to bring characters to life – characters that didn't exist before we started shooting," explains Jean-Pierre.

The other of familial loyalty is most obviously represented in the relationship between Jean-Pierre and Luc themselves. Surely they must have their artistic differences? "No, otherwise we wouldn't work together," says Jean-Pierre.

"We can criticize each other," Luc qualifies. "If one of us takes a decision with an actor, we try it the other way round and the other one agrees. It's quite rare for one of us to say something and for the other to say 'no'. We shoot facing one way, the other way, facing sideways, back, closer; it's not that one thinks one should do faster or slower, we think we should try different ways. The shoot lasts 25 minutes, so we know we can cut it, and keep one or two minutes. We don't know how the film will be when we put it all together."

We wander out from the three production offices overlooking the broad River Meuse that crossed the industrial valley and fed its factories. Jean-Pierre points out a bar. "If you go in, you go-out to the morgue," he says. Its patrons look like something out of an archetypal southern US biker bar – massive, bearded, bevvied and in a bad mood. Jean-Pierre talks of the depressing sight of young people on the cusp of heroin addiction, and their quick descent away from life. It's a reminder, conscious or not, that the Liège depicted in their films is for real, and their concern for it is heartfelt.

At a more welcoming local bar we take some pictures but the brothers seem less comfortable than in the interview, releasing more only after the arrival of Arne Dohmen, who turns out to be casually laconic in front of the cameras. As we leave, and reach to pay the bill, the waiter kindly offers the drinks on the house. "That doesn't happen everywhere," says Jean-Pierre. It undoubtedly doesn't, but it's good to see that the brothers are not just the denizens of Cannes, but also the laconic sons of Liège.

These two brothers O'C, what do they signify? "Being recognized," replies Jean-Pierre. "Even if we know it was given by 10 or 11 people and if it had happened to be another 10 or 11 we wouldn't have got it, it gave us international recognition we wouldn't have got without it."

"It's a good souvenir," says Luc. "Unfortunately, they're not made of real gold. There's a lot of them. They're not heavy. They're plated."

And where are they? "We buried them," says Luc, before adding after a pause, "A little joke." ■

With thanks to our translator, Alice Taylor

The story of the Dardenne brothers can't be told in minutes. Over the next 12 pages, we track down more of the long collaboration who know their best-to-get-all the angles on this unique filmmaking partnership.

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# JÉRÉMIE RENIER

THE DARDENNE'S ENDURANCE SON IS ALL GROWN UP

Words by Jacqueline Crotzer

Photographs by Christopher Furlong



elini and Mastroianni), Hervieu and Kinski. With Renier and Hauer there's a long tradition among European actors – high and low – of chiseling through a choice actor. But the Dardennes bathe the bane of switching actors with each film, plucking robots and nonprofessionals out of obscurity, then reining in.

That is, apart from Jérémie Renier. They gave him his big bow in their breakout drama *The Promise*, signed him up again for *Palme d'Or*-winner *The Child*, and when they needed someone to play a fractured joker in *The Silence of Lambs*, quotes who got a call? "It's incredible," sniffs Renier, chatting to *L'Uomo* in Belgium. "We like *The Child*, 10 years after (*The Promise*). I had no idea that they would want to cast me again. Incredible – 16 years after Jean-Pierre called me and said he and his brother would like to see me in Brussels. Just like that. I said, 'Yes, no problem!'"

In the decade since his terrific performance in *The Promise* as a kid caught in a moral headlock between his father and a dying man's last wish, Renier has hopped in and out on the radar of European cinema. He's worked with François Ozon (*Orphelinat*), Christophe Gans (Brotherhood of the Wolf), Lucas Belvaux (TV's *Mère de Famille*), Olivier Assayas (*Sunstroke*), and twice opposite ice-queen extraordinaire Isabelle Huppert.

But it's with the Dardenes that Renier has produced his most affecting, subtle and vivid work. "Oh sure, they have changed me," agrees the 27-year-old. "They're like my fathers or brothers. It's an amazing school for someone to work with the Dardenes. Because, with them, everything is about the actor.

The rehearsal, the preparation, everything is for the actor. The direction we have is always to practice something and find something. It's inevitable to do this. We rehearse a lot. Every day, step by step, I build the character. Like this, it becomes very full and very real."

In the years since *The Promise* and *The Child*, Renier has matured into a charismatic leading man – one who teeters between naive volatility, hard determination and discerning vulnerability. For *The Silence of Lambs*, he went the extra mile to add flesh to his supporting character. Or rather, strip it away. "Everything for me, with that character, is to do with the body. So I lost 15 kilos. Starting one month before the movie and throughout shooting. I just didn't eat. A meal for me was just 500 grams of fish and vegetables. All day. And it's so fucking hard. But it's good for the movie, because that's my character."

It's no surprise to learn that Renier's favorite fitness show is similar physical dedication. ("I like Christian Béke, he's an irreproachable actor.") And happily, he's eating again now. Particularly Japanese food, his favorite. But when will the Dardenes ring again, if ever? "I don't know," he shrugs. "It's impossible to know. They write very secretly. I hope they will." Either way, Renier's been keeping busy – even popping up for English-language movies in *Assumption* and *In Bruges*.

So the big question for Belgians rising sun is: Is *Bruges* as boring as Martin McDonagh's film makes out? "Sun, just two days is enough. After that, everybody is like, 'Oh my God, this place is shit!'" ■





# DEBORAH FRANÇOIS

GIVEN HER BIG BREAK BY THE DARDENNES, DEBORAH FRANÇOIS IS NOW ONE OF EUROPE'S HOTTEST TURNO STARS

Words by David A. S.



Any of the most memorable images from the Dardennes' films are of their female leads. "You can see that they like filming actresses and they film women well," says Deborah François, star of *The Child*, in which she played the put-upon wife of Bruno. Given her appreciation for the way Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardennes understand their female stars, however, it's intriguing that one of her strongest impressions of the shoot is the way in which they pushed her to deliver a performance that was ultimately nominated for a César, and won the Belgian equivalent of an Academy Award. "They didn't work with the boys and the girls in the same way," she says. "I had the impression that they were harder towards the girls than the boys. At the base of it they were perhaps more matey with the boys and with the girls they are very gallant. I never had any experience of them being anything other than real gentlemen but they were very demanding of their actresses."

François dreamed of becoming an actress as a schoolgirl in Liège, but for a long time it looked like remaining just that's it's down. She took theatre and diction classes for two hours each week but never expected it to amount to anything. After all, how many actors are out of work? "It was a fantasy really," she says. "Something that would only happen in another life."

She owes her breakthrough to her brother; who was a small newspaper ad looking for young women aged between 17 and 19 to act in a film. Respondents were asked to send in their CV with a photograph, and between 150 and 200 entries were asked to attend an audition. A phone call told François she had won her first starring role, in *The Child*.

In 2005, EW.com interviewed François for her leading role in *The Peasant*, director Daniel Mesguich's playful chiller which immediately followed *The Child*. At the time, she

recalled of the brothers' working method: "They say that actors shouldn't construct something around themselves but deconstructed, they try to break down the little cocoon around you."

She acknowledges that, aged only 17 and in her first film role, there was little experience she could bring to the part, but now she thinks more like an actress. "Of course they gave me a script and that was what went onto the screen. They have a precise idea of what they want to film and above, and you have to stay quite close to what they want. In the end, the script is so well written there's nothing you can add."

A French TV adaptation of Dickens' *Dombey and Son* has followed, as well as World War II blockbuster *Female Agents*, alongside Sophie Marceau. "Yes, that was very, very different from *The Child*," she laughs. "But I like things that are different and I had a really good time."

Are there things she learned working with the Dardennes that she has taken to other sets? "Such basic things as punctuality, respecting the people you work with, to be present and ready when you're asked. And precision to be in a given spot at a certain moment as the camera will be there too. Sometimes actors are quite protected but not with them; you really work."

You can currently catch François, now 21, in family comedy *La prisonnière* (a French girl who meets up with a Spanish boy living in a UK squat), *Unmade Beds*, directed by Argentinian Alejo Da Silveira and shot in London and Nottingham, and a Belgian film, *My Queen King*, where she plays the mother of a young girl in 1950s gay Amsterdam.

Would she be in this position without the Dardennes? "No, no, of course not," she says without hesitation. "Without *The Child* I would never have been an actress." ■

# ALAIN MARCOEN

ALAIN MARCOEN BIDS LIBERTY ON LIFE AS THE DARDENNE BROTHERS' LONG-STANDING DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Photo by André Arriet



From the anecdotal poverty of world-renowned  
townsiders, the city of Liège should step forward  
and take a bow for its services to Belgian culture.  
Not only has this Wallonian hub of some 500,000  
people nurtured the development of the Dardennes; it was also  
the meeting place for the brothers and their now long-term  
collaborator, director of photography Alain Marcoen.

Having first worked with the brothers on a clutch of  
documentary projects, as well as their short film *Il était une fois... à court* (*Le Monde* in 1987), Marcoen finally got the nod to lens *The Peacock* – a tale of one son's impossible choice between family loyalty and  
the promise he made to a dying mate.

The success of *The Peacock* – combined with the  
three men's mutually formative experiences on set – became the  
springboard for a relationship that has generated half a dozen  
films and a healthy haul of international acclaim. Nine years after  
their breakthrough collaboration, Marcoen rounds the project that  
invariably inhabits the lives of two of Belgium's most illustrious  
cinematic sons with his own. "That shoot was made laborious  
by the conditions, but remarkable by the brothers' tendency towards  
the restraint of situations, scenery, costumes and the behaviour of  
the actors," he remembers. "It was a film where the artifice of  
cinema wasn't apparent, and I hope that the invisibility of the  
light made some contribution to that."

If Marcoen's lighting of *The Peacock* was understated,  
its subtlety contributed to the growing spotlight which fell on  
the Dardennes following the film's warm critical reception. But  
despite receiving many plaudits of his own, Marcoen remains  
modest in his belief that "the role of a director of photography  
is to serve the style of the director as well as possible." In an  
industry famed for inflated egos, it's refreshing to hear such a  
fine proportion of his art speak with measured humility of  
the importance of subordinating his own particular talent to the greater  
good of the film. "I think that it is inevitably restricting to work with  
great directors," he reflects simply.

The Dardennes' working methods may make shooting  
with them a uniquely demanding process, but – as Marcoen suggests  
– there is great satisfaction to be had in seeing the film's final cut and  
understanding "that they were right, that they made the film that they  
wanted and that you were right to follow them." He adds with what  
feels like a hint of irony, "In my case, you didn't have the choice."

Marcoen certainly shuns no issue of egotism when  
asked if his preferred shooting style has had an impact on the way  
the Dardennes envisage and realize their projects. "I don't think  
I've influenced them," he says. "I modestly dare to believe that my  
personal concern with realism confirmed them in their tendency  
towards it, although it was already strong."

There is clearly no danger of Marcoen's own  
agenda stifling the aesthetic development of his most frequent  
collaborators. On the contrary, as Marcoen describes it, "their  
style hasn't stopped evolving, it changes from film to film. The  
status and placement of the camera is very different on *Rosetta*,  
*The Son or Lorry*. Their point of view is never God-like or  
omniscient, it seems to result from the behaviour of the characters  
themselves." Indeed, for Marcoen, the directors' insistence on  
the primacy of their craft is the key to their success as storytellers.  
"I think that the great lesson of the Dardennes is the importance  
of the actors, and of the part that they play. It's their faces that we  
must serve because it is those that tell the story."

Listening to Marcoen's experiences of working with  
the Dardennes, he sounds like the ring of a long-standing soldier  
who has served his country through thick and thin. Yes, there have  
been hardships and moments of doubt, but if there were sacrifices  
to be made, they were all for a good cause. So, having long since  
pledged his allegiance to the brothers, how does he feel about  
working with other directors? "In each film, whatever the director  
is, I listen to them with the same attention," he says. "I don't  
consider the Dardennes method the absolute rule and the others  
an exception. But I've seen that I've eaten with them the most often, they  
have a greater place in my life." ■

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# ARTA DOBROŠIĆ

THE NEW DARLING OF THE BARDEJINEN IS READY TO BREAK HER SILENCE

*Words by Janet Maslin  
Photography by Paul Morigi*





Arte Dobrošov is a contemporary kind of star. Born in Pristina, capital of Kosovo, she's a survivor of Europe's last twentieth-century war. But look at her now, everywhere rising actress, muse and symbol of a new, borderless Europe. From nationalism to humanism, her journey is, perhaps, a sign of better things to come.

Her audition for *The Silence of Lorraine* is itself an elegant story of the new freedoms and possibilities of a peaceful Europe. "I am from Pristina but at that time I was doing a play in Belgrade and then the casting agent from Paris called me because they saw other movies that I did in Albania," she explains. "He told me, 'They want to film you, can you be in Pristina?' So I went there and the audition lasted for five minutes. I just had to say, 'My name is Arte', and where I live. I couldn't speak French at all." Two weeks later came another call, inviting her back for a second audition. "I was in Sarajevo, so Jean-Pierre and Luc came and we filmed for one day – that was the first time we met. And after that they told me I could come to Liège to do two more scenes with the other actors, but in French."

If *The Condemned* were scripting the story, it would end with Arte on her knees in some Belgian backstreet, ultimately crushed by life's cruel, implacable opposition. But she worked hard, studying French for eight hours a day, doing homework alone in her hotel, and in a way, her success fits just as neatly with the Dardennes' narrative concerns. They may strip Rosette or Brune or Lorraine of their delusions in the face of harsh reality, but they allow them their hopes and dreams, they celebrate their optimism and self-belief.

For Arte, this nomadic experience was the perfect preparation for tackling the role of Lorraine, an Albanian immigrant pimped out to Russian businessmen looking for a green card. "I began from zero because it doesn't really matter that she's from Albania; she could be from anywhere, she could even be Belgian or from America, I said. 'Okay I'm going to begin from zero – she's a human being, she has this goal, that goal', and then I put her in the situation, and I see the whole, like her."

It's a hugely demanding role. Arte is a vision for the entire film, mercilessly deconstructed, left physically and emotionally naked. That meant 15-hour days for five months, but more than that, it meant living in the headspace of her character 24/7. "I wake up and I wear in Lorraine's life, and it was my life because I chose to live like her," she explains. "I tried to be alone as much as possible. On Saturday and Sunday when I was free, I went only to the pool to swim and that was it. After a scene, if what happened to Lorraine was very emotional, it was my body, my emotions. Sometimes I would cry but I tried to stay alone. I spent five months being Lorraine."

Before shooting began, there was an editorial month-and-a-half for rehearsals, which entailed eight hours a day spent covering the scenes from every conceivable angle. It was in these sessions that Arte got to understand first-hand how the Dardennes brothers work. "The first time that we met, I think we felt like we knew each other before," she says, "so I felt very relaxed and I think they also felt very relaxed. I just love the way they work because that is the way I work – I love doing rehearsals eight hours a day, just to do the scene as well as possible, and they do the same thing." ▶



A close-up profile photograph of a woman with short, dark brown hair and bangs. She is looking down and to her left with a somber expression. In the background, there is a memorial or display featuring a small white structure with a blue roof, some flowers, and a framed photograph of a person. The overall atmosphere is哀伤 (sad).

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BEING LORNA."



Surprisingly, given their intricate, intimate style, the directors also proved to be willing collaborators. "In one-and-a-half months we rehearsed almost all of the scenes and then, for example, they will say, 'We think you should do it this way,' and then they ask your opinion – 'What do you think?' – so they are really very open, and they leave you to do your own research and to give your own possibilities and what you think about the scene," she reveals. That process of refinement would continue right down to the wire: "Just one hour before shooting we talked and sometimes changed it completely and sometimes it stayed the same."

Seeing what Danièle François has to say about her experiences with the brothers, you could be forgiven for thinking that the Dardenne duo masters taskmasters, but Arta disagrees. Despite the rigorous preparation process, "We had fun during the shooting because they are very agreeable, nice and friendly," she says. "Plus, the whole crew was like a family: they've worked together for 10 or 12 years. You feel like you are at home. They give you this confidence, and I had confidence in them 100 per cent: I love them because when you don't doubt, then you don't think – you just do it."

As for her own future, it's fitting that Arta won't be placing artificial barriers in the way of her career. "I want to do everything," she says. "When I started acting I did theatre and film. I didn't have time to divide them, and when I got a project I need it completely and if the screenplay hit me I liked it. It's not that I said, 'Now I want this kind of movie.' It doesn't mean that I would love to do a commercial movie or Hollywood movie or an art scene movie – if the story is good, it doesn't mean that it's commercial; if the story is good it is worth doing 100 per cent."

But shouldn't she cash in now that she has plaudits from Cannes under her belt, and a famous directing duo on her CV? "It doesn't matter if you're paid more or less, or if you work with big directors or small ones," she insists. "Now what I have in mind is to work as much as possible and to choose different projects. Because I think the world is very small and we are all clients of this world. I cannot be stuck in one place." Lorna would certainly agree. ■

Check out [www.litteraturanet.co.uk](http://www.litteraturanet.co.uk) for more exclusive images of Arta, and to see full transcripts of all these interviews.

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## A YOUNG ACCOUNT OF FIVE OF THE WORLD'S GREAT, UNRECOGNISED FILMMAKERS



Now a decade, the BFI's *Visible & Sound*, poll online across the globe to gather the definitive list of the world's 10 best films. The idea, they say, is to determine 'which films stand the test of time in the face of shifting critical opinion.'

And yet, the list isn't half as instructive for what's on it (*Citizen Kane*, *The Godfather*, *Vertigo* – you can probably guess the rest) as for what isn't. Because although it responds to temporary shifts in trends and perspectives, it struggles to react to the more deep-rooted assumptions, prejudices and cultural roadblocks that will keep some films, and some filmmakers, forever absent.

The very idea of a cinematic canon raises questions that strike at the heart of the film industry. The basic assumption is that the films made available to us, whether on theatrical release or DVD, represent the very best that cinema has to offer. But we critics like Jonathan Rosenbaum and Mark Cousins have argued, the studios and distributors, the promotional machine and its compliant champions, have often conspired to keep great works out of reach. A whole spectrum of cinema – films that don't reflect the right kind

of aesthetic, political or commercial world view – has been struck from the record like an unloved lottery in Stalinist Russia.

Then in its entirety, the *Visible & Sound* list (comfortably over 500 films) does a better job than some of its rivals (Rosenbaum denounced the American Film Institute Top 100 as a "sole commercial ploy dressed up as a consortium of mediocres to repackag[e] familiar goods"), but the result is still an exercise in hypocrisy. While pretending to open our eyes to new experiences, the ranking of the Top 10 (buckling to the needs of market forces) simply serves to reinforce our intellectual incuriosity.

In tribute, then, to the forgotten faces of cinema, we've put together an alternative perspective. Think of this as a brief introduction to 10 titles that will be expanded online and in the magazine in a regular slot on *Out Pictures and Classic Cinema* from issue 21. In addition, the portraits of these directors were commissioned from a number of London's street artists, the scorpions and hustlers from the clowns of the Dordogne – the overlooked underclass of their world.

To add your own voice to the discussion, visit [www.letterstofilms.co.uk](http://www.letterstofilms.co.uk).

## BILL DOUGLAS

By Ferdinand von Schirach

You may have spotted the DVD of the Bill Douglas Trilogy – *My Childhood* (1972), *My Am Folk* (1973) and *My Way Home* (1974) – on the shelves recently and wondered why the name doesn't ring a bell. Born in Edinburgh in 1934 and creator of a modest, though cohesive, cinematic oeuvre (four features and four shorts), Douglas is one of this side's great filmmakers. A pioneer of British neorealism, his movies are stark and austere works which focus – autobiographically – on the nature of poverty and how it is perceived by those experiencing it, and those instigating it.



## DJIBRIL DIOP MAMBETY

By Brian Probert

In 1973, a filmmaker emerged who had the potential to change the shape of cinema. It wasn't William Friedkin, Martin Scorsese or even George Lucas, although *The Exorcist*, *Mean Streets* and *America, America* all debuted that year. It was Djibril Diop Mambéty, whose *Soule Soule* – a frenetic, dissonant, New Wave-inspired fable set about a couple who dream of escaping Africa – was arguably the most formally daring film of the decade. The fact that the Senegalese director is still largely unknown says a lot about the preoccupations and prejudices of critics and audiences alike.

## AGNÈS VARDÉ

By Hervé Guimbaud

New Wave pioneer Agnès Varda never entered the godlike status accorded the Cahiers boys' club, but it's a mark of her importance that they were always her biggest fans. Alain Resnais edited *Le Pavillon-Courte* (1964), Jean-Luc Godard took a cameo role in her love letter to Paris, *Ciné de 6 à 7* (1962), and Chris Marker appears as an animated cat in *Les Plages d'Agnès* (2008), a dreamlike autobiography told in beaches and film. *Les Plages* is a typically modest treasure-chest of clips from her 60-year career: docas like the legendary *Black Panthers* (1968), and features with brilliant, feminist roles for Jane Birkin and Sandrine Bonnaire. Given her genius for collecting and connecting, Varda's viewers will (hopefully) continue to swell.





## ROUBEN MAMOULLIAN

By David Rensin

One of the most complex and intriguing Hollywood filmmakers ever: Tbilisi-born but American bred, Rouben Mamoulian's directorial career ended prematurely after he was fired from both *Porgy and Bess* (1935) and *Cleopatra* (1934). In truth, Mamoulian's cinematic intelligence was just too eagle and too loaded for the mainstream. His stylized *Innkeepers* – mobile cameras (*Appleseed*, 1929), voiceover (*City Streets*, 1931), zoom lens (*Love Me Tonight*, 1933), three-strip Technicolor (*Reckless*, 1935) – mashed with a sense of dark sexuality and political change that crackled frighteningly just beneath the surface of apparently melodramatic fare like *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1931). He was the outsider on the inside, knowing or not that the likes of Sam Raimi and Christopher Nolan are following today.

## CHARLES BURNETT

A) *dead* dadive

Routinely described as the 'greatest American filmmaker you've never heard of', Charles Burnett is inching back into fashion. He has pioneered a resolutely independent path since his student film, *The Killer of Sheep* (1977), introduced black consciousness into American film. Through many years of enforced inactivity, Burnett never lost that touch of genius. It showed in the evocation of family and history in *To Sleep With Anger* (1990), and again in the mid-aughts of television – on the Disney Channel no less – who commissioned Burnett to make a family drama set in a southern plantation, and ended up with *Nightjohn* (1998), one of the most moving portrayals of emancipation ever committed to film.

Orel S  
London 15/10/08





Despite the wars, the bickering and the endless infighting, Europe has always maintained a veneer of stability. Not any more. Consensus politics is failing – even-tolerant Dutch; the Far Right is on the rise; and Russia's bullyboys are back. But for the ultimate evidence that the end is nigh, you just have to look at Belgium.

Yes, Belgium. Because if things are going down the toilet in Europe's most reliably depositario state, then the rest of us are definitely fucked.

Quick history lesson: since it was created in the nineteenth century as a buffer between France and Holland, Belgium has been divided between Dutch-speaking Flanders in the north, and French-speaking Wallonia in the south. Classism ensued – though Dutch was made the official language in 1968, French remained the preferred tongue of the aristocratic classes who maintained that link to France were the root of the country's cultural identity. Throw in a long-standing economic grudge from the poorer south against the richer north (which in recent years has been reversed), and you've got all the ingredients for major unrest. It all spilled over

in 2007 when, amid calls from both north and south for partition, Belgium spent over 150 days without a central government, while the pusillanimous prime minister described his country as no more than 'an accident of history'. So... not good.

If Belgium is in crisis, it's one that is reflected in the country's cinema. Put simply, there is no 'Belgian cinema', and there never has been. In Ernest Meltzer's *The Cinema of the Low Countries*, veteran Flemish director Henry Kuijsem traces the schism between Flanders and Fenneth (meaning to 1968) to the funding and subsidy infrastructure put in place by Flemish Minister of Culture René van Elstende, who saw 'indigenous cinema as "a means to intensify the identification of the country". This, says Kuijsem, 'was aimed at driving a wedge between our two cultures, and with hindsight, succeeded in its purpose.'

As Meltzer claims today, 'film funding – and culture – in Belgium really took off in the late 1950s, at a time when the country also found itself in an accelerated evolution towards two "cultural communities". From that political scheme, sadly, film seems to have suffered the fallout of regionalist moves to protect

WHY BELGIAN CINEMA IS AS DIVIDED AS THE COUNTRY'S FRACHTIOUS POLITICS.

# Split

local literature, theatre and folk art. It's a split that was mourned by many renowned filmmakers such as Henri Storch and André Delvaux, but since those people died it almost appears a natural one to newer generations."

Those newer generations find themselves working in distinct arenas "too far apart to compare", as Karel puts it. Belgian cinema, whose most famous contemporary sons are the Dardenne brothers, graduated from Belgium's documentary tradition, developing a style of social realism that gropes towards an uneasy cultural identity built on solidly left-wing credentials. In Flanders, home to the likes of Koen Mortier (*Ex-Drunken*) and blockbuster director Erik van Looy (*Memory of a Killer*), genre cinema, heavily influenced by Hollywood, has taken root.

Van Looy, whose heroes are Michael Mann and Brian de Palma, is Belgium's most commercially successful filmmaker. While the Dardenne brothers are lucky to get 150,000 burns on sets, *Memory of a Killer* had over one million admissions in Flanders alone. His latest thriller, *Loft*, a *Usual Suspects*-style potboiler, has just been picked up for international distribution.

And yet he has much to complain about when it comes to the reception of Flemish film beyond its borders: "For the French language movies, their path is sometimes a little easier," he gripes. "I get the feeling that they get easier access to the French festivals, most importantly Cannes, and because of the language they're also co-produced by France. With our movies being in Flemish, which is the same as Dutch, we have Holland, but Holland is not the same as France – it's much smaller and it's not the same budget."

But the very smallness of its own constituency has, paradoxically, allowed Flemish cinema to establish itself as a dominant voice within Belgium: "The strange thing about Flemish film is that it's really concentrated towards its own public," says Koen Mortier, whose stylized, black-comic drama, *Ex-Drunken*, received a relatively wide European release precisely by flying in the face of that stereotype. "It's like Bollywood in a way: You want to have your own public see the film, which means because there are only five million people [in Flanders] you have to have a lot of people out of that five million to get your money back, so you try to please them." ■

By Paul Joosten, *Screen International*

# Screen

# Twenty years ago Flemish movies were like a Jehovah's Witness that calls at your house at 8am on a Sunday.

In contrast to Wallonia, where the *Bastardines*' sombre social realism sacrifices commercial success for critical respect, Flemish filmmakers have self-consciously addressed the demands of their audience, an audience which, as Mattheij describes it, "rejects Hollywood cinema as the benchmark of 'true' cinema." Or as van Looy puts it, "Twenty years ago Flemish movies were something that Flemish audiences really didn't want to go and see. It was like a Jehovah's Witness that calls at your house at 8am on a Sunday – they had this motto like, 'Get out, we don't want to see you!' That's gone now, and that has to do with the fact that they're making different genres." And he, for one, is happy to see them what they want: "Of course you have to deliver quality work, but when I make a movie I try to make a movie that I like and that the audience will like too. It's not about being hungry for applause; it's just that making movies is so hard, such a stressful job, that I don't want to do it for just myself and a couple of friends. I want to make sure that this hard work gets enjoyed by as many people as possible."

This extent to which a new nationalism is fuelling these nascent cinematic identities is open to question, but the fact remains that Flemish audiences are largely unacceptant to French-language cinema, and the inverse is true in Wallonia. "I like Belgium very much, and although politically there are more and more voices saying the country should split and I'm totally against it, I have to admit that there's really a big cultural wall between the two parts," says van Looy. "It's very difficult to get access to the French-speaking audience and vice-versa." But

he's quick to add: "The nationalistic reflex has been going on for the last two or three years, but French movies have not been so popular for about 10 or 15 years." Mattheij agrees: "What I would urge everyone to bear in mind is the historical trajectory of Belgian cinema. Any 'nationalist' or 'protectionist' measures are anachronistic in that history, and not the defining feature of that history," he argues.

It may be instructive to see the schism in Belgian cinema as diplomatic rather than political. Compare it to Germany; for example, where the singular voice of New German Cinema has since split into two schools: Berlin in the north, and Munich in the south. From Munich, the Constantin Film Company releases commercial ventures aimed at an international audience with directors who openly dream of heading to Hollywood (think Oliver Hirschbiegel and Stefan Ruzowitzky); in Berlin, by contrast, filmmakers like Detlev Buck and Christian Petzold continue to make distinct, intimate dramas about the evolving identity of their country. Petzold once dramatically described Adolf Hitler as "Germany's Elvis Presley"; so frustrated was he with the way the Nazi leader had been commodified by internationally focussed German cinema.

In this light, not only do the divisions in Belgian cinema seem less threatening, they make sense in the tense, internal narrative of a country that has always struggled to achieve assimilation. There may not be unity exactly, but there is perhaps a kind of harmony ■

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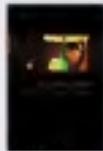


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### WHOISCREEN

Watching Real People Elsewhere  
Mark Cousins

Cinema has undergone huge changes in the last decade. Asian television has been setting the running, the rise of art house galleries, documentaries have broken through, television and DVD has invaded film, Herzog and a transforming pop-culture world seems to have shifted in the direction of the real and the visually graphic, and animation has become mass dominant. Meets by month in the journal *Foucault*, critics and filmmaker Mark Cousins has theorized and contextualized these changes. This volume is the first, a sceptical perspective, one-off history account of film today, urgent, original and written with panache.

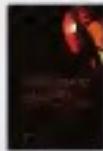


### THE CINEMA OF DAVID CRONENBERG

From *Raven of Blood* to *Cannibal*: Here  
Critic Cowie

Since the early 1970s David Cronenberg has attracted much speculation with a steady stream of weirdo – but often parodic – *Promotional* (1971), *Requiem for a Nun* (1972), *Marijuana* (1973), *Death Wish II* (1974), *Shivers* (1975), *Scanners* (1981), *Red Zone* (1986), *Crash* (1996) and pre-adolescent bursts of gung-fu in *A History of Violence* (2005). This new study provides an overview of Cronenberg's films in the light of their alternative reception, placing them firmly in the culture. *Promotional* is also highlighted, as is his highly influential work and includes a chapter on the latest, *Enviro-Phenomena* (2008).

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### CHÁVEZ: THE REVOLUTION WILL NOT BE TELEVISED? A Case Study of Politics and the Media

Paul G. Sturman

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# Belgium Beats

Words by Omer Ali  
Illustration By Paul Willoughby



**FOR BELGIAN BAND HOOVERPHONIC, IT'S BEEN A STRANGE TRIP FROM FILM SCHOOL TO SOUNDTRACK WORK FOR THE LIKES OF BERNARDO BERTOLUCCI. SONGWRITER ALEX CALLIER RELIVES THE RIDE**



It's not every band that has one of their songs featured on the soundtrack of a Bernardo Bertolucci film (before they've even recorded their first album). "It was quite surreal, to be honest," says Alex Callier, songwriter and member of Belgian's Hooverphonic, whose single '2Wicky' was picked for use in *Stealing Beauty*. "First of all we're Belgians, and the typical thing about Belgians is that we're quiet, down-to-earth."

Bertolucci's 1996 paean to Liv Tyler's youthful beauty was odd, too. "If you hear a song of your own in a film it's almost as if it doesn't fit in because it's so close to the bone, like it's really a part of you and it's in someone else's work. On the one hand, I thought it was very cool and I was very proud, and at the same time it was kind of weird."

Known as 'Hoover' at the start – they changed their name to avoid conflict with the band and other groups of the same name – the band was heavily influenced by Bristol's early '90s trip-hop scene. '2Wicky', about the two partners can inflict on each other in a relationship, is a prime example of Hooverphonic's subtle use of samples (in this case Isaac Hayes' version of Bart Bachrach's 'Walk On By') to ground the atmosphere of a song, and stamp it with something quite different from the original.

The song's inclusion on the soundtrack of *Stealing Beauty* ensured college radio airtime for the group, and a healthy following in the US, as well as much of continental Europe, something that has never quite been replicated in the UK, for reasons you can only ponder. Callier doesn't even own that version of '2Wicky' as he gave his copy of the soundtrack album away and never got it back; the band recorded a different version for the first album, *A New Stereophonic Sound Spectacular*. "I have to look on the Internet to see if I can still find that soundtrack because it's quite strange not to have it in my possession," he says.

The new (album) version of '2Wicky' was featured in teen horror flick *I Knew What You Did Last Summer*, while the film's follow-up, *I Still Know What You Did Last Summer*, picked up on one of Hooverphonic's best singles, the poignant 'Eilen', from the band's second album, *Blue Wonder Power Mix*. Other film and TV credits

have followed (including a few more cuttings for '2Wicky'), and plenty of their songs have been used in adverts, selling everything from mobile phones to Volkswagen Beetles.

After various comings and goings over the years, the band has settled on a trio of Callier, guitarist Raymond Geerts and singer Gokie Amaert. Their music tends towards the atmospheric, string-laden, verging on the epic and, of course, dreamlike. The reason for this has its roots in Callier's own, odd route to becoming a pop star: via film school. "I didn't go to film school for the film part," he says of his time at the RTTS, Brussels. "I wanted to become a sound engineer. But in Belgium you don't have a sound engineer degree, definitely not at that time, around 1980. So the only thing you could do was go to film school and then you had everything: sound engineering, film editing..."

"I always loved movies so that was already there, but in film school I really got interested in all the other aspects of movies, and one professor made me change my ideas about music. He got me into the whole aspect of creating atmosphere, not only using musical instruments all the time but you can use whatever – doors and breath, all kinds of noises – to create music. At that point I got the idea: why shouldn't we combine that with pop music and, if you did, what would it sound like? That's how Hooverphonic started, it was like one big experiment."

In 1996, Hooverphonic provided the soundtrack for an off-kilter Belgian thriller called *Shades*, starring Mickey Rourke. Callier found the difficult working process difficult at first. "When I write music it always has a filmic aspect, it always sounds already like a soundtrack but it's a mood I'm in and I translate that mood into my music," he explains. "In this case, you have boundaries, you have to watch images and match an emotion that the director wants to express and try to make that even stronger. You're working for somebody, which you never do as a pop artist, and you're obviously working in a team. I enjoyed that, because it's so different."

Callier is exceptionally knowledgeable about movie soundtracks and, in 2003, a series of Hooverphonic's best-known songs was presented at the Ghent Film Festival. The influence of certain film ▼



composer is obvious but, when asked about his influences, many see shades of the true aficionado. "First of all there's John Barry – all the stuff he did for James Bond was amazing. The connection I have with him is that he loves using major seven chords and also he is very fond of chromatic scales; he's definitely an inspiration."

"I'm a big Tim Burton fan, so if you like Tim Burton then Danny Elfman I still think the best soundtrack he wrote was Edward Scissorhands, that's fantastic. Cherub and the Chocolate Factory was amazing as well. I really like Thomas Newman. What can be particularly interesting about movie soundtracks is that sometimes you can really think that a soundtrack can be fantastic and the film can be shit. I don't like Meet Joe Black the movie that much but there's a couple of beautiful places on the soundtrack that I adore. I also look to Philip Glass, The Hours, The Illusionist."

Perhaps the most enigmatic of all Hooverphonic's albums is their fourth, 2002's *Hooverphonic Presents Jackie Dara*, a bizarre concept album based on a song Callier wrote with pop wizad Cathy Dennis after the two were passed up at a songwriting seminar in England. "The album was a lot of fun and for some people it was difficult to follow because it goes from extremely pop to really dark, from very intimate to big and large," Callier says. "I wanted to go over the top with that album, it was that it was inspired by some old residual. For a long time we thought about creating it as a musical or a film but, then again, it takes such a lot of time."

In case you're wondering, the character Jackie Dara here to music steams but she starts drinking too much and takes too many drugs. Her twin sister, who is a cook, makes her dinner and poisons her. "It's quite a clichéd story but the circles are there because mostly they're true. It's a very tragic story," Callier deadpans.

The band's ambitions haven't stopped there. A fifth studio album, *More Sweet Music*, in 2005, came as two discs, featuring two dramatically different mixes of the same 11 songs. Their very highly recommended latest album – and a good entry point for the band's music – was recorded live in the studio, as a six-piece, held together by Baile Ainsworth's exceptional pop voice. Its title, *The President of the LSD Golf Club*, was apparently inspired by

a taxi driver Callier encountered in San Francisco, who reminisced about the '60s. "Every Tuesday we took loads of acid and then we went to play golf!"

Big albums, using a 41-piece string section, tend to be followed by something more intimate for Hooverphonic. "I like the contrast," Callier says. "It's difficult for people to follow sometimes but I enjoy it. Sometimes I like to wear completely black and other days I wear all sorts of colors." The President of the LSD Golf Club was recorded using '60s instruments, including Mellotron and Farfisa organs. Callier is happy to embrace new technologies as well as the old. "I like to call myself a 'vibe-addict,'" he says.

A series of festival appearances this summer has just culminated, when we speak, in an outdoor gig in Hooverphonic's hometown, Breda-Meierik, 50,000 fans packed into what is Belgium's biggest market square, according to Callier. Head up is a bit of hymn improvement for him. "At this point I'm redoing our attic, we're making it into a home cinema with high-definition projection and a big surround system. I'm really looking forward to checking out our music in that new room in a couple of weeks."

When Callier talks about his music, the word that comes up most often is "vibe". This preoccupation seems to have started when, in his first job after university, he had enough money to buy a sampler and a computer. "I was living in a shitty apartment and I didn't have any money but I had a sampler and a computer, and that's how I got into trying to create a vibe."

"That's the point with Hooverphonic: we always try to create a vibe first, but then – very important – there are a lot of bands who do that as well, but tend to forget to write a song, and that's something I don't forget. Through the years we evolved from the first records being more soundscapes to the last records being more like classical movie scores, but the film thing was always the red thread through our work, so even if we make bombastic albums or we made more intimate albums, they always have a vibe and an atmosphere." ■

[www.hooverphono.com](http://www.hooverphono.com)

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*Guttle*

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A critic's review will make  
what you say personal to me,  
just as movies are about more  
than the two hours you spend  
sitting in the cinema, our reviews  
are a chance to talk about  
much more than the individual  
experience of the film in question.  
There are many different aspects  
of the movie-going experience  
and we will embrace them all.

**Anticipation**  
Ever waited six months for a new  
off-beat blockbuster? Read a book that  
you loved and earnestly awaited  
the adaptation more gleefully,  
surprised by an off-the-mill  
adaptation? Fantasy often plays  
a crucial role in your reactions to  
a movie. In addition, you might  
think a film should be measured  
and not analyzed as part of the  
movie-going experience.

Marked out of 5

**Entertainment**  
All other things aside, how did  
you feel for those two hours?  
Were you glued to your seat  
that the film spoke to your soul?  
Was it inspiring, disappointing,  
or just plain boring? Was your  
inner geeklet

Marked out of 5

**In Retrospect**  
Great movies live with you past  
every other second where they've been  
and the things they do stop  
the way you see the world, and  
this is certain to very or temporarily  
mark out a burned out power plant.  
Was it a quick fix and no risk, good  
for a lazy Sunday afternoon? Or  
the first day of the new year.  
Later did you leave it with a tinge  
only for full release with a gut-punch?  
Or did the first few drags seem like a doomed romance?

Marked out of 5

## CHAPTER Four

In which we review  
the latest film releases



## CHANGELING

DIRECTED BY Clint Eastwood  
STARRING Angelina Jolie, Tom Hanks, John Malkovich, Justin Timberlake

REVIEWED BY  
JESSICA CLEARY

**Kidnap, murder,**  
madness, corruption and another  
missing child: the true-story  
of '20s single-mom Christine  
Collins is so good/shocking that  
if it hadn't actually happened,  
some snooty screenwriter might  
well have dreamed it up.

Christine's ordinary  
neighbourhood life is shattered  
when her 10-year-old son  
Walker (Justin Timberlake) suddenly  
vanishes from the house. Five  
months pass. The police inform  
Christine that they've found  
Walker. The media gather.  
Black-tube popping, and the boy  
steps off the train to be reunited  
with his mother. Except Christine  
knows that this is not her son.

Blessed with this  
marvelous setup with real  
reassurance, with DoP Tom Stern  
meticulously reanimating period  
LA with composed beauty, and

Angelina Jolie heating up a  
superb lead performance. But  
from here, as Changeling starts  
spreading into deeper, denser,  
darker territory, the drama starts  
to thin out and clichés grow like  
mould on old bread.

Refusing to accept  
Christine's claims despite  
overwhelming physical evidence,  
the police chief throws her in  
the psychiatric ward. Enter John  
Malkovich as a GUTTY SHOUTY  
radio-avenging crusader who  
goes on a mission to expose the  
corrupt LAPD... save Christine... find  
her lad and uncover the horrific  
truth at the heart of Changeling's  
mystery: the infamous "Winona  
Chicken Murders."

Despite Jolie's powerfully  
committed performance, despite  
the scope and subtlety of Babylon  
& master J Michael Straczynski's  
scripting, Clint just can't help

slipping into melodrama – whether  
holding up his swelling score  
like an emotional cue-card, or  
holding the camera on Jolie's  
aching face just a few seconds  
too long each time.

Don't get us wrong: this  
is perfectly watchable mystery-  
drama. But it could and should  
have been more engrossing  
and that involves moving  
from the mud-slog into a gripping  
epic that involves the dimming  
of the sun and the  
bureaucracy in late '20s LA.  
(Read: America in general). Instead,  
it's been sandbagged by glossy  
chickies of every turn and populated  
by characters instead of people.  
If might have been an LA story  
to sit with *Chinatown* or *LA  
Confidential*. Instead, it's been  
pummeled into pure Hollywood  
product. It's the kind of movie Ron  
Howard would have made. And,  
at least there's Howard and Bruce  
Grierson in the credits as producers.

Along with terrific support  
performances (look out for Diana  
Dubyon's Amy Ryan), Jolie's  
powerfully committed central  
turn anchors the movie. But even  
she can't beat the teeth-grinding  
final scene. "I do have one thing,"  
grows Christine, bravely. "What's  
that?" asks the garrulous cop.  
"Hope," she smiles before  
walking away across the street  
as the cameras pan high above  
her. *Tot!* Jennifer Croster

JESSICA CLEARY  
DIRECTOR OF THE  
LITTLE MERMAID AND  
THE LOST WORLD: JURASSIC PARK

ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY  
Every movie has a story  
we're telling ourselves. These

In Retrospect... The  
glossy, less slicked,  
less bad. *The*



## *RELIGIOUS*

In a spirit of harmony and tolerance, we need an atheist and a Christian to see Religious in the hope that they'd have a fight... -

No. Okay so I'm a self-hating Catholic-turned-atheist. And you are...

23 - A happy-sleepy born-again Christian who graduated last year with an honourable degree in philosophy and Theology.  
24 - What was your gut reaction to the film as a piece of propaganda? Bill Maher, quite rightly, doesn't respect your religion. How did you feel about that?

25. It was much more thought-provoking than I was expecting, but his blinken bias made me feel that he was no less a fundamentalist than the religious

people he was criticizing. I wasn't offended by the film, though parts of it made me feel uncomfortable – as it does when your family's dirty laundry is aired in public – like with the health and wealth preachers. It would definitely offend a Muslim, a Mormon, a Scientologist and all those other cultish religions. And any unthinking, narrow-minded Christian.

...one of the more interesting things that the film had to say was that there's nothing original about Christianity. It wasn't for the fact that a Roman emperor made it an official religion, today we'd make it in the same breath as any other marginal death cult from the early stages of man's intellectual development.

...I didn't really feel like he succeeded in making that point.

He emphasised Jesus being born on December 25, but most Christians know that wasn't when he was born. It was when the Roman Church decided to celebrate his birthday because it fitted in with their festivals. Secondly, it wasn't a 'marginal death cult'. The whole reason Christianity was adopted as the official Roman faith was because it became the dominant religion in Roman culture.

Ans.: "I've always wanted to ask a proper question: why is it that you can pick and choose which parts of the Bible you believe in? How easy it is the measured word of God, but you don't buy the following strike?" Why don't you live your life according to the various crazy statements about Biblical law? Picking and choosing is just a

distortionless transmission margin  
of band,  $\text{MHz}$  87

• Christians believe that the Bible is both a human and divine book. We do not believe, like the Jews or Muslims, that the Bible was dictated to people by God. Thus Christians do not take everything as word-for-word literal which would be ridiculous. There are many different genres in the Bible, you don't need them all in the same way. Poetics need to be interpreted in a different way to history etc. That's not destroyed. It's common sense.

卷之三

110

303

Base review. \$1 billion/quarter available for the full calendar year of spending.



## PATTI SMITH: DREAM OF LIFE

Directed by Steven  
Soderbergh  
Produced by Steven  
Soderbergh, Tom  
Globus  
Written by Steven  
Soderbergh  
Music by Patti Smith  
Cinematography by  
Matthew Libatique  
Edited by Steven  
Soderbergh  
Distributed by  
Miramax  
Rating: R  
Running time: 100 mins.  
U.S.A. - 2005 - 2005

FILMFACT  
Documentary

### Patti Smith and

Steven Soderbergh have put 15 years of effort into this artistic interpretation of Smith's own rock biopic, *Dream of Life*. It's a knowingly non-linear and poetic assemblage. It's also implausibly dull.

Defined by her fierce, unorthodox femininity, maternal wryness and irreducible approach to politics, Smith is a modern American legend. And the little-hired-one doesn't just let anyone film her non-stop for over a decade, so the footage here is, firstly, a rarity and, secondly, of huge interest to her committed fans. It's quite a coup for first-time feature director Soderbergh.

It starts promisingly – in grimy black-and-white on a train. Patti narrates her birth, childhood, marriage to Fred

'Sonic' Smith and the fall-out from his early death, which was rapidly followed by her brief wife. Soderbergh has his subject set up, as it does years of self-imposed exile from the middle plane and her significant coming out on the other side as a single mother and middle-aged leftie poet.

So, we think, at last an insight into this femme-re-on-the-cards, friend-to-the-streets [Ginsberg, Burroughs, stars Dylan, Stipe] and spiritual descendant of Rimbaud and Blake. But what we get is montages and name-dropping: the precise date at which Dylan turned the guitar she admits she can't play and a director too bemused with Smith to enter the editing cuts.

Live footage of crowd-

pleasers like 'Land' and 'Gloria' provides a welcome chance to see Smith at her best: as the shots of her moving renditions of poems or simply being perched at an anti-Americana political rally. But when we're asked to follow her round the globe to watch her pose by poets' gravestones, the homage goes too far. Even a scene where she returns to her family to eat hamburgers – given added poignancy as her parents have since divorced – is flatly banal.

It's useful to think fashion photographer Liberman spent 11 years behind his hired Bolso to produce this. After the first four years, he maxed out his credit card to the tune of \$100,000. Not one to give up, he scaled down his operations

and, aiming to get to the heart of Patti as a person and not just a rock star, hired her sitting in the corner of her bedroom, with only her most important belongings as audience-members.

And yet, unless you like endlessly rehashing about Walt Whitman and William Blake and blah and blah there's really nothing to see here, folks. Sweep Heels.

JUDITH SPENCER...  
writer of music faculty  
Sweat, here we go!

ENJOYMENT... Steven allied  
himself with a crew who  
got seen one off their bus

IN RETROSPECT...  
Kleenex you speak on  
all shall? Really? One



## THE MAN FROM LONDON

DIRECTED BY ANDREW LELLIOTT  
WRITTEN BY ANDREW LELLIOTT  
PRODUCED BY ANDREW LELLIOTT  
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE MAN FROM LONDON FILM FUND  
IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH THE MAN FROM LONDON FILM FUND

[www.manfromlondon.com](#)

**'Unforgiving'** is the word that instantly springs to mind when considering the latest work from Hungarian auteur Béla Tarr – a brooding, non-nightmare loosely based on a novel by Belgian crime-writer Georges Simenon.

The minutely chronographed opening chapter lithographically unfolds in a single shot as gritted introspective lighthouse keeper Matton (Márkusz Krobos) witnesses a series of criminal escapades on the dockside beneath him, resulting in a man being thrown into the sea and a suitcase full of banknotes left for him to procure.

The remainder of the film is made up of similar gritting, protracted tracking shots, as our hero wrestles with his conscience to discomfiting background cacophony of tapping hammers and an infinitely

repeated squeaky-box refrain.

Those who have caught (and enjoyed) Tarr's metaphysical disaster movie *Werkmeister Harmonie* or his seven-hour communist allegory *Sátántangó* should be able to sink into and digest this new film with relative ease. But it is still a film that demands a colossal amount of persistence and contemplation. Alan MacK

**Anticipation:**  
One of Europe's  
most extraordinary  
filmmaking talents. Few

**Enjoyment:**  
A though, though,  
though, though, though  
and then some. These

**In Retrospect:** THE  
shocker. For better  
and for worse. This

## Take a waltz on the wild side with Art Director extraordinaire, David Polonsky.

**LFLines:** An animated documentary, that's a pretty novel concept. How did *Waltz With Bashir* come about?

**Polonsky:** I worked with Ari Folman on a TV documentary series which had short bits of animation in each episode. That's when Ari realised animation could be a tool for documentary storytelling. For a long time he wanted to deal with his experiences of the war as an infantryman. He wanted to find what he was looking for – a fresh way of dealing with an old issue.

**LFLines:** Ari has described making this film as a form of 'therapy'. Interpreting his memories and putting them on screen, did you feel like his therapist?

**Polonsky:** The fact that he was able to tell his story with an animation, I guess was therapeutic in itself for him. And for us, dealing with the visualisation of the story, it was like dealing with any other story. Actually I think the hardest part was the script, and the fact that the film existed as a regular talking-heads documentary before we animated it.

**LFLines:** The film has a very clean, pronounced style. How do you decide on that visual identity?

**Polonsky:** It was clear that the style had to be quite minimalist in terms of the obviously dramatic. We couldn't exaggerate too much, and we couldn't make ourselves too present – the story was the most important thing. We were depicting places that were supposed to be real, but we were dealing with memory so we came up with a way of using photographs in a deceptive way. I took photographs from the internet and drew over them and between them. You're not sure if it's a photograph or drawing; you're never sure what part is real and what part is made up.

**LFLines:** But there is some video footage?

**Polonsky:** We knew that it had to be there to make people don't move out. *Forgiving* is not dealing with a real event. Making those pretty pictures of specific things takes out a little bit of the story – we had to make clear that this was for real, what it really happened.

**LFLines:** The film deals with emotions that are raw and horrific. How difficult is it to capture that through a medium as ridiculous as animation?

**Polonsky:** You really are steeped over this thing, and you're very close to it. You're not thinking about the mechanics and the final effect, as only have you when you see what you've done in the end. One thing that kind of keeps me humble was the general consensus was: You realise that what you're doing is not really a work of art, you're dealing with things that have a direct influence on your life, and it's a bit messy. **Glynn**



## WALTZ WITH BASHIR

DIR. DAVID FORTIER  
2008, 90 mins

www.waltzwithbashir.com  
Credit: David Fortier

**Ten minutes into *Ari***  
Furman's *Waltz With Bashir*, it's easy to see why this remarkable documentary was the talk of this year's Cannes Film Festival.

There's simply never been a film quite like it, its clean, almost telekinetic lines meshing a tale of brutal history as Furman takes us on a journey into the dark heart of Israel's invasion of Lebanon in the 1980s. And yet, though rooted in the past, *Waltz* reveals a country struggling to come to terms with the psychic damage wrought by war in the Middle East. It could scarcely be more relevant today.

On June 6, 1982, the Israeli Defence Forces advanced into southern Lebanon, wading into a civil war that had been ignited by religious differences and fuelled by one atrocious after-

another but for all that its images of violence are harrowing and direct. *Bashir* isn't a film about war per se – it's an exploration of the permanent marks that violence can leave, not just on the body of the victims, but on the minds of the visitors.

Furman, who was only a teenager when he went to war, was provoked by the nightmare of a friend. He realised that he, too, had a recurring, crypto-dream related to his experiences, like the memory of which was locked somewhere inside his subconscious, along with his memories. His journey into his own psyche takes us back into the folds of history, ending at the gates of the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Beirut, and the shattering horrors that took place there.

But there are other, more curious memories in the mix. While the narrative is somber and black humour of the soldiers never (*Apocalypse Now*, their tragic, hot-rolled bodies and empty eyes are also strikingly reminiscent of other associated Jews at Auschwitz and Berlin – the horrific history of the fathers that somehow gave way to the sins of their sons.

*Waltz With Bashir* isn't about politics or blame, however. It's about the dehumanizing tar of hate. As such, it's an urgent, compelling film that isn't undermined by the tired dichotomies of the region. Credit, too, to David Fortier's art direction and Max Richter's funeral score, which hangs over the film like a veil. This is grown-up filmmaking that

demands and deserves grown-up engagement from its public. Let's hope it gets it because that is utterly essential viewing. *Mel Brooks*

**Anticipation...**  
*Killers* (see p.48) and *Death*

**Enjoyment...**  
The film's great achievement is to be overwhelming without ever becoming manipulative. *Tim*

**In Retrospect...**  
Genuinely courageous  
could be a trademark  
*Tim*

See [www.filmtribunals.co.uk/2008](http://filmtribunals.co.uk/2008)  
for details of a special members' event with David Fortier at the ICA.

JULIA

REVIEWED BY  
JESSICA HALL

**REVIEWED BY  
JESSICA HALL**

## Meet Julia, an

eccentric ginger grannie in a tatty dress and cheap bling, accompanied by a cloud of smoke that drifts alongside her like a... so cold, pale and unblinking as a porcelain doll. And, like the doll, it easily shatters. She can't be armed with her All meetings, shags anyone who'll look her way and has no one to company but the fog between her stormy fingers. She's quite odd.

But one day after being plucked out of the gutter by Diana, her neighbour and fellow AA member, Julia finds herself roped into a complex kidnapping that,

needless to say, doesn't quite go to plan. Tempted by the overpowering allure of \$20,000 (that's a lot of vodka), Julia decides to help the desperate Diana take her child back from his non-granfather.

Director Pauline's mystery bag of tricks in a performance that sees her become the film's most extraordinary facial expressions, a remarkable volume and remarkable ability to judge each on screen interaction with perfect precision make it impossible not to be sucked in. She's proven in the past that her talents run deep, but this time all the world is truly her



stage and she tops this off her own reservoir to show what she's worth. The story does meander a little, and the plot tangents are far too ludicrous to contend with, but none of this matters. The film is not about the story, the plot or the outcome, but an as-tale-would-suggest, life about Julia, and her own journey from no-quarter bitch to self-realised mother figure. **Melanie Raikes**

**ANTICIPATION:**  
Alannah makes good  
and with such kid  
being it... **Poor**

**ENJOYMENT:** **Excellent**,  
but a bit long. **Poor**

**IN RETROSPECT:**  
First glances don't  
matter - sweetie makes  
the film. **Poor**

## SCAR 3D

**REVIEWED BY JESSICA HALL**  
STAMPED August 2009  
Rating: T-18+ Years

**REVIEWED BY  
JESSICA HALL**

## Nowadays, it seems

we're in much fortune porn in cinemas as there is regular porn on the internet. How to stand out in a crowd? *Scar 3D* arrives with a very literal answer! The producers can boast that this is the first live-action movie to utilise the same high-def 3D technology that James Cameron is using on his upcoming sci-fi blockbuster *Avatar*. But here they made the best of it?

As a child, Joan Burnes (Angela Bettis) was tortured by a serial killer. Sixteen years later, she returns to her home town to find a coppery solar doing the same thing to her once Olympian pony blues blanket and all of Olympian's friends. Joan's attempts to stop the new series of kidnaps are interpreted with flashback to her own experience, so the audience gets twice the sadness for their cent.

The plot is predictable: the setting terrible, the dialogue awful, the gore unimaginative and there's none of the irony or psychology that the likes of *Saw* or *WWE* ever conceivably claim. However, putting aside pesky questions about the actual filmmaking, does the technology work?

Judging by *Scar 3D*, high-def 3D is very similar to standard 3D – but without the red-and-green lenses. With the glasses off, the film looks like two identical images, one superimposed over the other, only slightly out of phase horizontally. Putting the glasses on creates a single image with added depth, which works well when geometric objects like buildings are placed at an oblique angle to the camera, but not so well when objects are placed perpendicular, which makes it a bit like watching an old 3D video game. There's also



a tendency for objects to blur in the very near and very far distance. *Scar 3D* completely fails to throw things at the audience in an attempt to scare them, which is kind of the point. Whether this is due to the limitations of the technology or just director Jed Weinstock is unclear.

What is clear is that *Scar 3D* is a rushed attempt to cash in on new technology. Bring on *Aster*. **Alexander Peatly**

**ANTICIPATION:**  
Waiting for a live-action  
3D feature has been  
torture. **Poor**

**ENJOYMENT:** On the  
other hand, this is like  
being tortured. **One**

**IN RETROSPECT:** **Me**  
know you psychologically  
assured, but not in a  
good way. **One**



## LET'S TALK ABOUT THE RAIN

BY JONATHAN LIEBMAN

Jean-Pierre Jeunet's latest film, *La Pluie sur la Pluie*, is a touching, melancholic drama about love and loss.

### Something about

the south of France lends itself to sun-drenched rom-coms – the pastime providing a respite from the slog of urban life. Agnès Jaoui's third film as a director, *Let's Talk About The Rain*, immediately gets to work shattering some of these stereotypes. Set in the height of summer, the southern weather is unseasonably wet, instead of expressing glee de vive, characters are enthralled by their surroundings.

Agathe Vileneuve (Jaoui herself) returns to her childhood home in the south. She's a writer and feminist who has decided to enter politics. France's gender equality quotas mean she's been sent to the region to balance

the electoral list, but she clearly doesn't want to be there.

Her sister Florence (Pénélope Arnaud), lives in their childhood house with her family and Algerian housekeeper, Mimouna (Mimouna Hadj). Florence is unhappy in her marriage and harboring resentment about being the less-favored child of her recently deceased mother. Mimouna's son, Karim (James Dehouze), is an aspiring filmmaker who, together with his friend Michel (Jean-Pierre Bacri), decides to make a documentary about Vileneuve for a series on "successful women".

As with Jaoui's previous films, 2000's *The Rules of Others* and 2004's *Look At Me*, *Let's*

*Talk About The Rain* is a blend of closely observed relationships and family drama, employing a cinematographic technique of using long shots with all the key protagonists assembled on-camera to capture the family dynamic. And once again she has joined forces with Jean-Pierre Bacri to pen the screenplay.

Yet there's a much stronger comic influence running through this film than in her previous work. Bacri's role as Michel – all dourly eccentricity – is handled brilliantly, backed up by strong performances from Dehouze and Bacri. Yet the film feels a little bit like it's teetering on the edge between earnestness and all-out farce; several scenes demand into pure slapstick deflating.

From the more serious social and political messages Jaoui approaches to love and relationships at once surprisingly sentimental at times – not least in a disappointing denouement.

Jacqui films always have something interesting to say – and there's no doubt she's a talent – but, while enjoyable, this isn't her best work to date. Kit Beeler

**Anticipation.** Please, we were asked. See

**Entertainment.** Despite many miseries, look the film in just sharp relief about where it's headed. Then

**In retrospect.** See Jaoui's best. Then



## CHOKE

DRAMA BY CHUCK PETERSON  
DIRECTED BY DAVID FINCHER  
WITH CHRISTIAN BALE,  
JULIA ROBERTS, CLIVE OWEN

Running time:  
110 mins

"I'm not who you

think I am." Two pretentious bears: Victor Mancini (Christian Bale), protagonist of *Choke*, should be heralded closely. For while Chuck Pasternak's feature debut may be adapted from a novel by Chuck Palahniuk, while it may feature a self-deluding protagonist who regularly attends group therapy sessions, while it may tap squarely into the darkness rife of contemporary culture and while it may close with an indie song (Radiohead's "Ride On") that looks like it was scored for the film, this super-sharp romanesco comedy for the new millennium neither is nor should be confused with David Fincher's vacuous, malevolent epic *Fight Club*. The sooner you get that pectoral star out of your system, the more you can appreciate Gregg's fine for what it really is.

Victor leads a life of illusion. He is a tax evader driving from one loveless encounter to the

next, a disgruntled Colonial re-enactor at a historical theme park, and a self-confessed "evil scheming douchebag," serially figuring his own asphyxiation at twenty restaurants to pay for the hospital care of his once-politically and now medically demented mother, Ms. Angeles Hudson, who no longer even recognizes him. Along with his equally lost buddy Denny (Brad Wilcox Henke), Victor pursues an aimless existence of non sequitur gratifications. Then suddenly change arrives. He finds real love with Edie, an unorthodox new psychiatric nurse (Kelly Macdonald), he comes unexpectedly close to learning the identity of his long lost father, and he discovers that he might just be a raw messiah, sent to save an imperfect world. All are truths that prove hard for our tragic protagonist to swallow.

It all first becomes episodic and fragmented, this is because

Choke charts Victor's path from mental and spiritual chaos towards something like clarity, with everything flying into place in the mile-high ending. Gregg is best known as an actor (you can see him here playing Lord High Charlie), but he also proves to be an assured director and fearless adaptor, never shying away from the ribald, if not downright scatalogical, off his source — while the ensemble cast offers notably unflinching performances.

Set in the flotsam and jetsam of postmodernity — where things are ready as they seem, where truth is merely the facade of circumspection, and where meaning is endlessly deferred — *Choke* is a tragedy big story for the inchoates. It plays pants-the-pants with an array of mixed metaphors, unified by their collective concern for the difference between appearance and reality, as its desperately disconnected anti-

hero goes on a quest to find (or at least to stop avoiding) something anything, real in a world of fiction, fantasy and lies. That the resulting adult Ruritania should turn out to be not only immensely funny, but also endlessly surprising — and, yes, genuinely affecting — is no less than a miracle for our age. *Watch this!*

Anticipation: **High**  
Burst: **None** Flight:  
Gish-style atmosphere:  
Solid

Enjoyment: **High**  
Clichés: **None** Life/Art  
Distinction: **None**

### IN RETROSPECT

Many in America — as in an earlier gospel, for the younger age — fear

See page 38 for an interview with Chuck Pasternak.

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## GONZO: THE LIFE AND WORK OF DR. HUNTER S. THOMPSON

DIRECTED BY DAVID SHEPHERD  
WRITTEN BY DAVID SHEPHERD &  
HUNTER S. THOMPSON  
PRODUCED BY DAVID SHEPHERD

Available  
now on  
Blu-ray

**Every once in a**  
while someone comes along  
who so embodies a movement  
that their DNA becomes  
interwoven with it. Hunter S.  
Thompson was gonzo – an often  
partisan, anti-establishment  
journalist, smirking with dry  
witlessness and highly distrustful  
of government. The style he  
invented – earned after a James  
Booker blues guitar riff – was an  
evocation of late 1960s sociology  
fuelled, for Thompson, by drinking  
his body weight in alcohol and  
ingesting as many hallucinatory  
nerophiles as possible.

Highly gifted, recklessly vain  
and extremely funny, Thompson  
took his own life in February  
2005, at the age of 67. By then he had renounced cult status,  
from teenage boys attracted by  
the unconventional lifestyle to  
the spousals who marvelled at his  
loose mimbros. His death left

a void that Alex Gibney's  
documentary attempts to fill, wrapping up the great man's life in all its multifarious complexity. |

Gibney is lucky to have  
had high level access to  
Thompson's closest friends  
and colleagues in the two  
years that it took to put the film  
together. Ex-wife Anita Thompson,  
ex-president Jimmy Carter and  
writer Tom Wolfe are just a few  
of the characters appearing  
on camera. Viewers also get a  
great insight into Thompson's  
friendship with actor Ralph  
Braaten, a self-described  
'Catholic charbag' who turns  
into a drop-munching internet  
cartoonist under Thompson's  
rather particular tutelage.

Johnny Depp also  
features, narrating much of  
the film and reading excerpts  
from Thompson's writings. Depp  
played the writer in the excellent

adaptation of his most famous  
book, *Fear and Loathing in  
Las Vegas*, which clearly had a  
profound effect on him. That said,  
it would have been interesting if  
Gibney had explored this angle,  
rather than employing Depp  
simply for voiceover duties.

The film chooses to focus  
on the period from 1965 to 1975  
when Thompson was at his most  
profile. There's a lot of detail  
on his time with the Hells Angels,  
plus his *Fear and Loathing on  
the Campaign Trail* with Richard  
Nixon and George McGovern.  
But there are also mere glimpses  
of Thompson, from black-and-  
white home footage to his  
lystorous 1970 campaign to become  
the first gonzo-smoking  
sheriff of Aspen. But there's  
passout little on his demise,  
when the writing dried up and  
the mood swings became more  
unpredictable. It's touched upon,

but it feels like an afterthought.

Then again, this is Thompson's  
posthumous examining – a highly  
personal tribute to the iconic writer  
that chooses to focus on his  
greatest moments. What emerges  
is a tragic story of a man forced  
to live his persona – to be gonzo  
24/7 – which finally took its toll. But  
it's a highly enjoyable look back at  
a writer, the likes of whom we'll  
never see again. **Stu Maier**

**Anticipation:**  
Thompson, Gonzo &  
three-year silence  
**Rating:** 4½

**Enjoyment:** Strong  
and polished. What more  
could you ask? **Four**

**In Retrospect:**  
A great retrospective  
of the original anti-  
establishment book. **Four**

## We offer Alex Gibney, director of *Gonzo*, a penny for his thoughts as America takes to the polls.

You look at this campaign now, and there's a lot I could say about both candidates in terms of their problems. But in terms of their archetypes, there is the guy who's leading us towards a bright future as a vision of idealism and possibility; and unlike defeated Presidential candidate George W. Bush and Senator John McCain, he's trying to capture the disengaged assessments of people who are angry and don't know why. He's trying to capture their fear and their anger — or as Hunter said, their 'fear and loathing' — and he wants to ride that to the White House much like Hunter did.

Hunter is a character we all recognize. He's a kind of character type that keeps coming up over and over again. He stands for something valuable — the dark side of the American character. I hope that comes through in the film.

I think that's the reason for doing the film, to be honest. These are times where, in this country anyway, the most sensible move would be a moderate — telephone call — who's actually acting as somebody else. So not only do you have a guy who's cracking jokes, but it's pretending to be somebody who he isn't. That's how things are changing: things are becoming that's the only sensible voice in a world where the law becomes so battered.

The degree of cynicism with Sarah Palin, I mean, there were brief moments before I could catch my breath when I saw her at the convention, and they'd stage-managed that moment where you had that woman standing up, very effective, very young and so forceful, but also a person of losing who she was — the anti-intellectual and all that — and sort of saying, 'Are you angry? Yeah? I'm angry too no come with me.' I have no idea what I'm angry about, but knock on, we both feel the same way! We're in some deep shit now. But over time I think people are beginning to understand that what they want is a President, and not necessarily where conservative magazine *People*

With Palin, it's blind rage, it's emboldened rage — unfortunately, since George, that's what the Republicans have been so good at doing in the United States: marshalling archetypal blind rage. I have a brother who is a big Sarah Palin fan, he's a Rush Limbaugh fan, you know, and it's because he feels disengaged — he doesn't have a good job, he's angry and he feels like all these liberals in Massachusetts are all elites and they're just laughing at him, but if he were to stand back and analyze the Republican policies that are helping him in poverty in might be different. Politics is not just policy platform — it's fear and all its shadowy emotions. But the emotions that the Republicans are starting in this kind of blind rage.

Check out [www.BillMoyers.com](http://www.BillMoyers.com) for a full interview of the interviewee.



### BELLE TOUJOURS

One of the last French films to be released in the US, *Belle Toujours* is a touching, lyrical drama from director Sophie Fiennes.

Reviewed by  
Sarah Trebilcot

### By the time you

read these words, Portuguese director Manoel de Oliveira should be celebrating his 100th birthday. A reason to rejoice, in addition to the fact that the film he is producing (he's made six shorts and a feature since he finished this one in 2005) still manages to be coherent, witty and socially astute.

*Belle Poupois* is Oliveira's way of saluting past heroes, most notably Luis Buñuel, to whose 1967 film *Le Jour des morts est un jour heureux* (the title acts as a charming addendum). Belle Poupois (standing in for Catherine Deneuve) ensouls the role of Severine Berling, the one-time bourgeois prostitute — now 30 years older and wiser — who is coerced into spending a scandalous evening with one of her old customers, Michel Poiccard (Hervé Lyssewski).

There's tension in the air when they first meet, due largely to the fact that Severine is eager to know whether Hervé informed her late husband of her clandestine erotic adventures.

all those years ago. The two leads play off each other in a magnificently discreet (and subtly smirking) manner, with Poiccard clearly nipping his upper hand and Oger somewhat stunned by the situation she's allowed herself into. Interspersed with beautiful, long-held shots of the glowing Portuguese skyline (to signify the passage of time), *Belle Poupois* is in the end a quiet elegy into the effect of severing ties with the past. It's a small film, but a beautiful one. Alan MacK

### Anticipation

Expecting one of the classics of the '60s — could go either way. *Bill*

**Enjoyment:** Perceptive, witty and perfectly realized. *Pear*

**In Retrospect:** Some may feel that's changed due to life simplicity, but others will find it delightful. *Tree*



## Lakeview Terrace

By Mark Kita

SUMMER OF FILM  
LAKEVIEW TERRACE  
DIRECTED BY NEIL LUDTKE  
STARRING JONAS CUARÓN,  
SARAH WILSON, ANDY WHITFIELD

**Popular legend has it** that Samuel L. Jackson signed up for *Seasick On A Plane* as soon as he heard its unusually blunt title. No reading the script for him — just a quick phone call and sign on the dotted line. He liked the concept that much.

It's a nutty story. But if it's true, what convinced him to take part in *Lakeview Terrace*? Was it the film's random pairing of words that indicates nothing about the film's content or indeed anything else? Was it the chance to work with Neil LaBute, the celebrated playwright whose last film was the modifying remake of *The Wicker Man*? Or was it, perhaps, a great big pile of money?

*Lakeview Terrace* casts Jackson as a thuggish single-parent dad. He's also a novelist. So when a young mixed-race couple move in next door, it's time to wheel out the patented God Hates Niggers routine. If it's not he does quite well — but boy hasn't he seen it beaten. It's hard to get excited by this thick even when Sam pants down his trousers and goes mental in his

boxer shorts, it feels depressingly tired and familiar. We know it, and he knows it too.

It's rare for mainstream Hollywood to successfully deal with real-life issues in an informed, intelligent way — but all least most films make an effort to appear sincere. *Lakeview Terrace* tries racial tension as a neat excuse for yet another post-week thriller. Any pretense of intense discussion is abandoned by the close of the first act, clearing the path for a spot of violence and a reassuringly simplistic resolution.

On the basis of this and *The Wicker Man*, LaBute should really stay away from moving pictures. As for Sam, well, let's hope he enjoys that nice fat cheque. Hell Kelly.

**Anticipation:**  
Jackson goes away?  
**Against Whatever:** Too

**Enjoyment:** Periodically suspenseful — almost offensively so. **Too**

**In Retrospect:** Even & gay as again, *One*

## LWLies talks to director Jonas Cuaron about family, history and filmmaking.

**LWLies:** How did you come up with the concept for *Ale Muerte*? What made you decide to make a film out of photographs?

**Cuaron:** I wanted to do something with the same format as *Orson Welles's* 1962 film *Touch of Evil* but do it a bit differently. I wanted it to be feature length so I had to work really closely with the narrative so that people could sit through 90 minutes of photographs. The other thing I wanted to do was mark the way life was normally done by taking the photographs first, and then use them to write the screenplay. One device that I was able to use with photographs was the auto-exposure, which I felt worked really nicely, both for connecting a kind of intimacy with the characters and for developing the characters as two people, inside and outside. Finally, I wanted to break the myth of life being this really experience format. I wanted to do a film that you could do yourself at home.

**LWLies:** Is that idea of accessibility behind the competition you have launched for aspiring filmmakers?

**Cuaron:** In the festival, most of the people who were inspired by the work were young people, interested in see what you could do like in this way. The competition was a good idea to promote new ways of making films. Also, I posted a lot of photographs from the movie online because I found that the story that I told in one of very strange that could be told with those photographs. It's very interesting in seeing what people will do with this format.

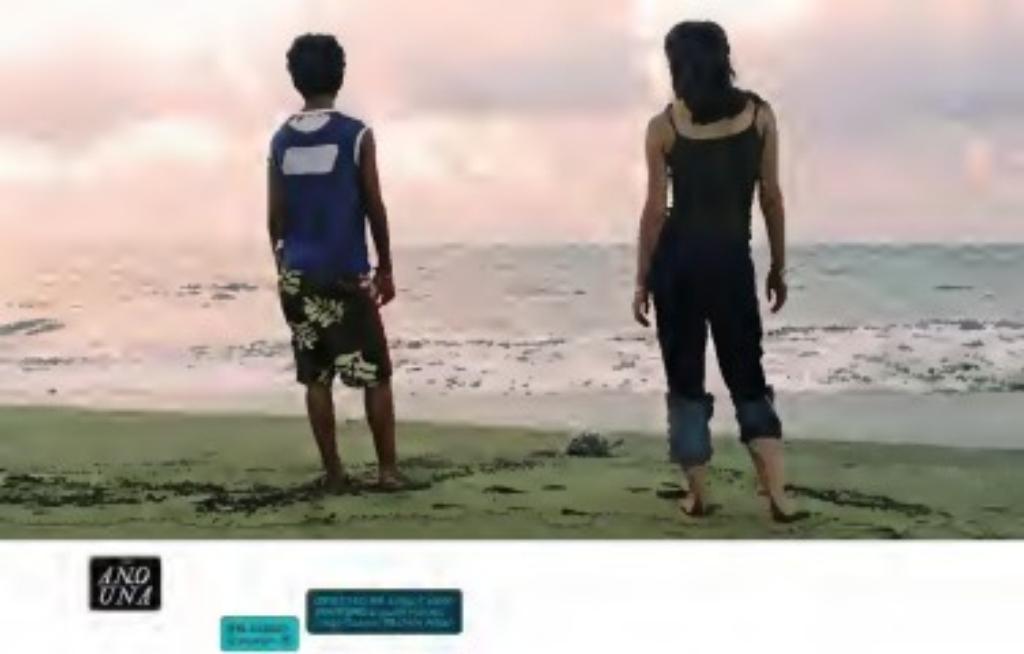
**LWLies:** Why did you decide to focus on people who were very close to you?

**Cuaron:** I think taking photographs of my reality allowed me to be honest. What I enjoy about the first work is that it breaks many stereotypes. The character of Alex quel from the US coming to Mexico is not the stereotype of the Mexican that is very rude as a tourist. She is the opposite in a way, really self-conscious. So I think it allowed me to photograph a very intrinsic reality.

**LWLies:** Why didn't you use actors for the dialogue?

**Cuaron:** Part of what I wanted to capture was the essence of that year, and the voices of my family came with that essence. So I decided to record all the family members except my grandpa because at that point he'd had surgery so couldn't speak. I was lucky because the main character, my brother, was acting as he felt comfortable. All the characters kept their real names except my girlfriend because I knew she would be ashamed for my brother to be saying crazy things about her, but all the family members were pretty cool with the process. *Profound key*

Want online to now? Visit [www.lwlies.com](http://www.lwlies.com) to check out the transcript and for more info about the short film competition.



AND  
UNA

Elisa & Daniel

DIRECTOR: ALIO UVE  
WRITER: ALIO UVE  
PRODUCED BY: ALIO UVE  
IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH: MEXICO CITY FILM FESTIVAL

**Executive produced**  
by Alfonso Cuarón. Alio Uve makes an auspicious debut for his son, 27-year-old Jones. The project began as a year-long photographic assignment in which the fledgling filmmaker took spontaneous images of people in their everyday lives. At the end of the project, Cuarón and his partner, Erianna Harper, compiled an installation in which they mounted the thousands of images in one room, ordered in scenes composed of those

Genealogies begin to emerge and a natural narrative develops when it becomes obvious to Jones that the most photographed subjects were his younger brother and Evans. From this template emerged Molly and Diego, the two fictitious characters that form the kernel of the film's self-reflexive narrative concerning an impossible romance.

Molly [Harper] is a 21-year-old American who travels to Mexico and ends up renting a room in the house owned by the family of 14-year-old Diego (the character of Diego Cárdenas). A close relationship immediately develops with Diego, who had previously been consumed by desire for his cousin, Emilia (Erika Gómez), reflects his obsession. Molly enjoys Diego's reflections, finding the attention and respect missing from her relationships with boyfriends back home in the US. The tension continues to grow until Molly returns to New York. Led by his heart, Diego decides to run away to the Big Apple and attempt to turn her elusive tenderness for him into romantic affection.

Crafting his characters to correspond with the photographs of Evans and his younger sibling, Cuarón further blurs the lines between fiction and reality both

by casting Evans as Molly and by insisting on using the real people who appear in the photographs rather than actors to record the written dialogue and voiceover narration. The one exception to this is the character of Salvador, who is interpreted by the character actor Fermín Gómez. Salvador Cárdenas, Jones Cuarón's grandfather who passed away during the making of the film, was the author of the novel *Dioniso*, and his writing exerted a major influence on the film, not least in its treatment of the impermanence of things and the passage of time. As well as poignantly depicting the difficult path from adolescence to adulthood, Alio Uve also skilfully observes the experiences and sensations of being a foreigner (Molly in Mexico, Diego in New York) and the arbitrary boundaries that separate people.

Though clearly indebted in

concept to Chris Marker's 1962 film *Le Jévre*, Alio Uve should by no means be consigned to its shadow. Relaxed by the brilliant sound design of Martín Hernández, this is an equally bold and thrilling piece of filmmaking that redefines the possibilities of the medium. Jason Ward

#### Anticipation...

• *Chris Marker*:  
Languid film from the now all-acclaimed Mexican director Alfonso Cuarón. Four

#### Enjoyable...

A coming-of-age love story, meditation on genealogy and a technical tour de force will take care. Four

In Retrospect... The tantalising off-a-mayor tour de force. Four



## HUNGER

### STORYBOARD

© 2008 CFC Film Fund, Northern Ireland Film Council, Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, Belfast, Northern Ireland, Film Council of Great Britain, London, and the British Film Institute.

#### Shooting on location

In the harsh geometric spaces of the Maze prison, Belfast, McGaughan has produced a biopic of IRA hunger striker Bobby Sands. He is situated in violence. It is the violence of the winters against the inmates... It is the violence returned by the inmates themselves. But it is also the violence of cinema – the lurking lingering gaze of McGaughan's camera, the sickening stamp of flesh on concrete, the echo of all the horrors that the Maze has seen and heard.

Bobby Sands (Michael Fassbender) – gunman, politician and martyr – was the leader of the IRA inmates in Northern Ireland who were protesting their right to be recognised as political detainees. When Thatcher's government refused to negotiate, preferring instead to beat the opposition out of them, Sands

went against orders to stage his second hunger strike, one that would eventually lead to the death of 16 prisoners.

It's fascinating to talk about artiste-turned-filmmakers who treat cinema like a canvas, but McGaughan (whose last exhibition saw him put the focus of Britain's Iraq War dead or stamped) has brought the full dimension of the medium to bear. And in Michael Fassbender he has himself a chameleonic performer at the top of his game. This is a site-making turn for Fassbender (or perhaps a site-re-making one, given his recent ubiquity), which has something of the Christian Bale in teeth (its physical commitment), and the depth to which he is able to disappear into character (a brittle, watchful turn that teases into stiffness only in the

Sands signature scene, a 20-minute single take in which Sands and a priest [Liam Cunningham] debate the morality of his actions).

If that sounds contrived, in fact it brilliantly takes Hunger beyond its comfort zone as historical drama, and brings it into the glowing light of the present day. It begs the question: where else in the world might these conversations be happening? With an icy clarity, McGaughan sets about implicitly demolishing the narrative of British self-identity. We see ourselves as a country that has always been on the right side, acting in the right way. And yet, he says, we have a history of using propaganda and violence to distract or destroy uncomfortable truths. And if we did it then, perhaps we are utilising it now.

But for all that Hunger is a

rough, gruff and aggressive experience, the message never overhauls the medium. And though, at the very end, McGaughan finally diverts from the path of ugly realism into visual metaphor, it's a small slip in a film that otherwise resudes control. **Mark Schilling**

**Anticipation:**  
The film has a solid history. There

**Enjoyment:** An uneasy but urgent experience. **Fear**

**In Retrospect:**  
Because important questions, but never at the expense of a dramatic narrative. **Pain**

See page 38 for an interview with Michael Fassbender

# encounters shortfilmfestival

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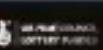
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## EASY VIRTUE

DIRECTED BY STEPHEN ELLIOTT  
STARRING JESSICA BELL, KAREN STODDARD,  
KRISTIN SCOTT THOMAS, CLAIRE DANES

If *Easy Virtue* was an object, it would be one of those servants' trinkets decked with a smiling portrait of the Regents. Hot tourists take home as a reminder of living, effervescent England and its spilling upper classes. Kitsch, henries, Englishness for export. But in 2006, this is hardly pushing the ornate envelope, is it?

This is the second adaptation of Nella Last's comic play following in the footsteps of Alfred Hitchcock's 1935 version, and a return to the director's chair for Stephen Elliott, the man behind *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*. The era? To jazz up the Jazz Age for modern audiences. Coward meets the period. If you like.

It's a pleasant enough comedy that sees an American India refugee driver (Jessica Bell) causing a stir at the English country pile of her new husband (Alan Alda). A toothsome, pseudo-blonde in a world of mousy English ankles, she soon locks horns with her soon-faced mother-in-law (Kristin Scott Thomas) which sets up for diluting the family gene pool with red, white and blue blood. And there it... for the rest of the film

Coward is renowned for his sly comedies of manners and subtle social observation, but *Easy Virtue* is lacking in both departments. To be fair, there are shakies, but no rib-crackers amongst the catty snides and wry efforts of the urbane cast, although the butler (Kris Marshall) tends to get the last laugh.

Elliott keeps the film moving at a good clip without providing any real depth to the characters, while the social satire is, these days, irrelevant. Indeed, the director appears to have outmost of Last's back story (blyly suggested in the film's title) as its tied to root for her beyond hoping, as the do, for eventual escape from this stuffy English setting. Like that?

Anticipation -  
tackling jackets at  
the ready - *Easy Virtue*  
does feel Coward - that  
could go either way. See

Enjoyment - looks  
good, nice cast, nice  
writing - oh, it's  
fascinating. Then

In Retrospect -  
pure bull. Standard  
puff, that sort of. See

## LWLies takes time out from the city with Liverpool's own king of culture, Terence Davies.

*LWLies Of Time and the City* is structured so as to resemble the fragmented nature of memory. Was the fact that you hadn't made a documentary before an advantage in terms of not having to be linear or objective?

Davies: Yes, but I had some freedom because of that. I said to the editor that we should cut as little as we could. It was easier right from the start on all the preceding documents that it wouldn't be linear and that it would be subjective. Even though did cause problems. I was told that I had a mathematically contextualised the Second War. Well, that's nonsense, of course I have. It may be out of sequence but I have contextualised it. It is a subjective movie over thus I wouldn't budge.

**LWLies:** Is it fair to say that sounds have equal value to the images?

Davies: Oh yes, yes I think I've got a very good emotional memory, not just of what was seen, but what was heard. At 10, rarely unless you're, you listen all the time to these football results at a quarter to five on a Saturday evening - like a radio. Like the one I used at the beginning of *Giant*, when I still care of the shopping trolley. I had no idea what it was but it was like a magical marker. Like that speaking - it was fabulous - I think my eye is very acute and my emotional memory is the same because those things are visceral. And I think if those things are true people will recognise that as true, even if they are highly artificial.

**LWLies:** The music also acts as a counterpoint to some of the harsher images, particularly the stem clearance.

Davies: Music is a counterpoint in always much more interesting. My favorite work is *Clouds* - I think that Uncle Pengo is one of the greatest achievements in art that when he dies at the end of *Vivian*, and I can't ever read the play without weeping. Pengo has been destroyed. He realises all the years he has missed have been for nothing. And the last line is, 'till my child, there is such a weight on my heart if you only knew how much my heart aches?' And his mother says two-and-a-half pages about hope. And you know that that hope is going to be crushed when she gets to 80. And you dismiss with the end of that play. You just weep. What he shows you in the course of complete disillusionment. It's so simple, but *Clouds*, what a genius! If you can do that with images and music there is something sublime about it.

**LWLies:** What do you think of the Liverpool of today?

Davies: It's not the only I grew up in. All the places associated with my childhood are gone and that is hard to bear. Going back to Liverpool, it was very hard not to feel that everything you'd known had been lost. When Merv



## OF TIME AND THE CITY

DIRECTED BY TERENCE DAVIES

ON SALE  
NOW

### Shown to rapturous

acclaim at Cannes, where it was presented in a special sold-out screening, *Of Time and the City* marks the welcome return to the screen of Terence Davies.

Arguably the UK's most distinctive living filmmaker, the early feature *Gayané* (1982) still lingers cemented his cult status before *The House of Mirth*, an unjustly maligned adaptation of John Kennedy Toole's novel, and *The House of Mirth* saw the director working on a broader scale with international financing. In the eight years since *The House of Mirth*, however, Davies has seen various projects fail to materialise and, as has been widely reported, was gutted from the UK film industry while other lesser talents found funding easier to secure. For Davies, a deeply sensitive man, the sense of vindication following the reception of this impassioned documentary about his Liverpool birthplace must have been pronounced.

Created as part of the Digital Departures scheme, set up by Northwest Vision and Media to be in with Liverpool's City of Culture status, this idiosyncratic and hugely personal power to Davies' hometown brilliantly blends a pained verbal account of his early life in Liverpool with contemporary and archive footage of the city. A analogy to his birthplace that also serves to capture the themes that define his early narrative works: homosexuality, Catholicism, death, loss and the power of cinema. *Of Time and the City* also explores great anger and regret,

This is particularly evident in the heart-breaking black-and-white images (many of which are reproduced from *Nora Preysland's Who Cares and Didn't the Rent Strike?*) of the post-1945 slum clearance programme, which saw the working-class communities relocated to purpose-built flats on the outskirts of the city. It is

also present in the contemporary footage showing the Liverpool of today as a place of relative loneliness and desolation, where alcohol is剖析 to young teenagers and where the costly make-over and regeneration vibrations have come at the expense of a distillation of personality and identity.

Narrated in Davies' own distinctive voice with quiet grace, dignity and a frequently playful sense of humour (the audio clips of *Around the Moon* are especially ripe and poignant with innuendo), the film has been deliberately structured as a work of fiction so as to act as a fascinating, if largely memory-driven and non-linear portrait of a place to which there was always so much more than Liverpool and Everton football clubs and the popular chart sounds of the Beatles.

Of equal note to the images we see are in fact the sounds that we hear; with Davies and his attentive producer drawing

together a rhapsodic collection of music including Hendi, John Tavener, Leontine and Mater. For Davies, music, film and culture in general always provided a refuge from the realities of the world, and *Of Time and the City* also performs a similar function. Arriving hot on the heels of Guy Maddin's *My Winnipeg*, it also reminds us of the redemptive power of the documentary. *Jesse Wente*

**Anticipation...**  
Presented to the nation  
as cause. *See*

**Enjoyment** Almost as essential, to watch or to meet have been to make; thus is a brilliantly uninterested portrait of Davies' birthplace. *Paul*

**In Retrospect** a film that, aside of all else, could not have been made by any other filmmaker. *Peter*



## CHOKING MAN

104 - 110 mins. English.  
Directed by Steve Berra. Starring Steve Berra, Amy Yuen, James  
Dowd, Nico Muhly, Michael S. Wadsworth, Daniel Koenig, and others.

Available  
December 16

**So you've been a**  
camera assistant on Ridley Scott's *The Duellists*, Richard Attenborough's *A Bridge Too Far* and Richard Donner's *Superman*. You've made pioneering music videos for Michael Jackson (*Billie Jean*), Dire Straits (*Money for Nothing*) and A-Ha (*Take on Me*). You've even been a побільшіровання director on features like *Electric Dreams*, *Teenage Mother*, *Ninety Sixties*, and *Alex Stewart*. *Empire* Manager: Now, for the very first time in your long career, you get to conceive, write and direct your very own independent feature project. Congratulations... What do you do?

Steve Berra's answer is *Choking Man* – a quiet, unassuming film about a quiet, unassuming character Jorge (Octavio Gomez) in a hoodie-wearing Ecuadorian immigrant who can't understand why the few people

are always resistant and he barely ever offers a word. But Berra makes up for the impenetrability of his protagonist's exterior by suggesting a hardly tormented inner life. Here Jorge's nervous disorientation is captured both by the camera's handheld restlessness and by the tendency of the lens to focus on single, arbitrary elements within the frame. Meanwhile, Jorge's daydreams are visualized in colourfully animated interludes, inspired by the illustrated Hemlich Maneuver poster in the diner where he works as a dishwasher. At night, when he has returned to his apartment, he has nothing but finds free expression through the taunts of an aggressive, if imaginary, roommate (Pablo Andrade).

All of which makes *Choking Man* a tough film to pin down. On the one hand, it joins the ranks of

*Eraserhead*, *Citizen*, *Shame*, *Speaker* and *Kurosawa* as a "muttering man" film, in which a disturbed anti-hero, struggling to distinguish tortuous from reality, has within him the capacity both to destroy and to redeem. On the other hand, it is a celebration of migrant experience, set in the most multicultural area of the world, Jamaica, Queens, where over 140 languages are spoken. Jorge may embody an extreme form of marginalization, but his evolving relationship with new Chinese waitress Amy (Eugenia Yuan) – mediated not through words but through an exchange of cultural objects – shows his tentative first steps towards integration and what customs officials refer to as "normalisation". He might be suffocating in the open isolation, but there is still a place for Jorge at the diner's Thanksgiving table. For all its concern with

social and mental derangement, *Choking Man* is a strangely tender film, grounded in authentic performances and settings, yet elevated by lyrical imagery and Nico Muhly's eclectic score, it ends up much like the poster and protagonist from which it takes its title, demanding closer attention than it is ever likely to get away from.

**Anticipation:** There is no bear, but it looks exceptionally exciting all the same. That

**Enjoyment:** Neither too bitter, nor too cloying – easy to swallow all round. Four

**In Retrospect:** Strange, beautiful yet underhanded – it leaves a lump in the throat. Four



## QUANTUM OF SOLACE

MARKETING

With the new Bond film due to open in October, we speak to Marc Forster about his vision for the movie.

**Incoming transmission:**  
deciphering the top-secret  
missives filed from our Q&T  
debrief.

**Q:** There might be one thing that we can all agree was good about it, which was Daniel Craig. **H:** Camel Drag is magnetic. The one really good thing about the film, because of the way he approaches the character, is the momentum of it – like a shark that can't stop moving. Some of the shots are structured already so if they've cut it half a second after the action has already begun, as it were in the edit they can't quite keep up with him. Although actually, given how fast-moving the rest of the film is, it's probably just bad editing.

**Q:** You can sort of see what they were trying to do with this character. I think what they wanted to do in Casino Royale

was show a man who's a bit of a frag and turn him into what he needs to be to be James Bond. In this one, they were trying to show that Bond is a necessary evil for our way of life. But they just fell back into the old stereotypes, and you can't have the stereotypical James Bond that was built up over the years of Roger Moore walking at the cameras, and also trying to say that you're having some kind of semi-serious political discussion about the way of the world.

**H:** I think even if the vision for the film had been good, it wouldn't have mattered because Marc Forster can direct an action film.

**Q:** That was my problem: it was just a dull, dull film. There was nothing. It was just completely unmemorable – unmemorable locations, unmemorable characters...

**H:** One thing on the location: that sprung to mind watching this is that it's actually based, not on a true story, but there was a peasant revolt in Bolivia when an American company tried to privatise the water supply. It's a really contemporary and relevant story line. But what this does, and it does the same with the locations, is strip all these events and places which are in there just rich and meaningful and steeped in history of any kind of racing. That's what Hollywood does. Anything that is rich and meaningful gets stripped of meaning until it's just a two-dimensional backdrop for something that they think is more important, which in this case is explosions and life-and-death. I was just sad to see them fall back on Vito Scotti-type stuff that we've seen a hundred times before. And there's one scene

with the plane that was just fucking unforgivable because it took Bond back to *Die Another Day*, the CGI was so shit. What a let down.

**Q:** Even where there were a couple of good ideas for action set pieces, they were terribly executed. Marc Forster doesn't know where to put the cameras to shoot an action scene, and he can't pace one, and his editor can't cut one.

**Q:** It was such crap. It really pissed me off.

**H:** At the very least, Casino Royale failed to deserve, whereas this doesn't even better.

### Screen

100: 3/10

101: 3/10

102: 4/10

Check out the full review at  
[www.3dnewstimes.co.uk](http://www.3dnewstimes.co.uk)



## OSS-117: CAIRO, NEST OF SPIES

REVIEWED BY  
MICHEL HAZAHAVICUS

**'OSS-117'** is the code name for Hubert Bonisseur de la Bâth, a French James Bond-like with more luck than intellect and a nice line in smirking suits. Sent to 1960s Cairo – a writhing hotbed of international espionage – to investigate the death of a colleague, he takes on mitigate rechts, a displaced royal family, a clutch of Nazis and a bevy of beautiful babes, all with a cocked gun in hand.

Based on a truly series of mucky exotic adventure stories, the first of which actually appeared four years before the name 'James Bond' ever entered our consciousness, the film's critical success in the highbrow French press was something of a surprise.

Remarkably silly, there are some laughs to be had, not least an ongoing gag with a chicken farm, and an excellently nonchalant sexual torture scene. The humour flies a little close to the wind at points with puns including the slightly grop-inducing silencing of a referee for causing sleep disturbance. However, an assist performance from Jean Dujardin, with a bland mouth and a raised eyebrow at the ready, assures that these always rest on the right side of

acceptability. They pointedly play on OSS-117's Western arrogance, rather than poking fun at the foreign culture he encounters.

The plot, with its carefully signposted twists, is just about strong enough to be entertaining in itself and not solely as a platform for the extended joke. The film looks good too, with delicious retro colours echoing the stylised and high camp performances, and adding authenticity to the period setting. However, the humour is too often lost in translation for English audiences, based as it is so firmly in French culture and stereotypes. Still, *Nest of Spies* is an enjoyable enough slice of Gallic comedy for a midweek escape to the sunny '60s. *Patricia Key*

**Anticipation**... A spend about a week that are super upp... *Sousole Joko* we've seen it before. See

**Enjoyment**... Funny, it's little fresh. *Fernando True*

**In Retrospect**... Because a surprisingly clever, although, without having been too heavy on the cheek muscles. Those

## Interrogating top spymaster Michel Hazahavicus.

**LIMLIES**: A lot of the humour of *OSS-117* is very 'French'. How well do you think it translates outside France?

**Hazahavicus**: We showed the movie in different countries and didn't get the same reaction in all of them. In the United States, people laughed more than in France. I think it's not as French to look the French. This is very English or Belgian. In the States, they laughed earlier in the movie because they catch the jokes quicker than in France. In France people wait for me mostly what the movie is like before they allow themselves to laugh.

**LIMLIES**: It got very positive reviews in the serious press in France. Were you surprised by the response?

**Hazahavicus**: I was surprised because it's a comedy and when you do a comedy you don't have much good press in general, but we have been very lucky for this one. Maybe it's because of the music and maybe it's because French comedians are not so good. They can be very fun, but in terms of cinematography, the care to make the movie, they are not so good. So we had the chance to make a stylish comedy, which I liked.

**LIMLIES**: What were you inspired by in terms of the touch?

**Hazahavicus**: The first third version, the Hitchcock movie from the late '30s, and the French movies of that period.

**LIMLIES**: The character *OSS-117* comes from a series of French books from the '60s. Is the film much like the books?

**Hazahavicus**: The books are very bad. The character is really sexual and misogynistic and homophobic. The scriptwriters tried to read a book and he said we must understand the book which are terrible, very facile, so we forgot it and made our own character. We gave back everything bad in the character and tried to make it funny.

**LIMLIES**: You do sometimes push the comedy quite far, even though it's quite a gentle film. How far did you feel you could go with that?

**Hazahavicus**: I wanted to go as far as possible but I didn't want people to feel irritated to have laughed. There was a risk of not to make them jokes digestible for the first 20 minutes, there's presentation of the movie itself. When the audience starts to say 'Okay you're politically correct, stop with that', then we can go on. We also tried not to have one single pervert, because that guy is so stupid he doesn't know anything. He doesn't hate anybody, he just doesn't know. He says what he thinks it's good as my and because he's French, he's a slut, he's Catholic, everyone who's rich like him has an older boy. The other point is to put the audience in the '60s, so the audience find comfortable because you can enjoy the distance and judge it. If you did seriously the same jokes today, it's not sure it would be digestible. *Fernando True*

*op*

## BLINDNESS



FRANCISCO FERNANDEZ MARENCO  
2008, 104 min., 12+, R-R  
Drama, Thriller, Crime, Drama, Thriller

Photo by  
Francisco  
Marenco

**A man goes blind.**  
Within 24 hours, more have followed, victims of an epidemic/no cause, no cure. The government locks down the city quarantining the blind in an abandoned asylum and leaving them to fend for themselves. The only person unaffected is the wife of an optometrist (Julianne Moore), who falters blindness in order to stay with her husband (Mark Ruffalo) and help him adjust to this devastating new life.

Set in an unnamed city in what might be the present day, Fernando Meirelles has created a film that deftly undermines the audience's ability to anchor themselves. The result is a queer kind of dislocation—an unerring intellectual blindness, but brilliantly upes the feeling of being lost adults in a suddenly hostile and unpredictable world. As the government struggles to cope with a rising tide of panic,

the blind are left to fend for themselves. Despite the efforts of the doctor and his wife to maintain some sense of civilization, things take a Lord of the Flies-style turn for the worse and a violent militia takes hold. Led by Seal (Gérard Butler), a gang of mutants seizes the food, determined to extract a high price from the rest.

What follows is a near masterpiece of human drama—a pitch-black morality play in which the characters are stripped emotionally and physically naked. Without demonizing disability (as some have claimed), *Blindness* offers an unfathomable look at our capacity for evil and the devastating power of despair.

Here, in the asylum, the action is almost unrelentingly ugly. Meirelles couldn't have made this film three years ago; nobody would have believed it. But in a world that has witnessed

Hurricane Katrina and heard whispers from the Athrodome in the dark days that followed, *Blindness'* bleak cynicism is all too credible.

But on either side of this middle 40 minutes the film makes misjudgments. Meirelles and CoP César Charlone run the metaphor of light and dark into the ground with a series of tiresome visual tricks. And problematic too is the relationship between Ruffalo and Moore: if it is already under strain when the epidemic takes hold, but what begins as a brilliant study of gender politics, role reversal and sexual frustration gives way to a typical Hollywood conclusion in which disability is just a journey of self-improvement.

Overshadowing all this, however, is an exasperating voiceover from Danny Glover that might have been a chatty job on Morgan Freeman but turns out to

be a genuinely maddening narrative goof that beats the audience—hitherto-groomed much respect—like children. The film's final shot, meanwhile, sacrifices real courage for timid ambivalence.

So close to greatness, *Blindness* is a becoming but flawed drama that is nevertheless worthy of a second look. Matt Rothwell

**Anticipation:** blind word of mouth on Cancer, but trailer had a jazzy confidence of star value. For

**Enjoyment:** seriously difficult to sit through—sometimes for very good reasons, other times for very bad. Tim

In Retrospect:  
Oddly, I'd be the first that knows more about  
ever since. Tim



## LEMON TREE

BY DAVID HORN

REVIEWED BY DAVID HORN  
DIRECTOR: NICHOLAS RICCI  
STORY: NICHOLAS RICCI, DAVID HORN  
CINEMATOGRAPHY: JONATHAN LEE  
PRODUCTION DESIGN: CLAUDIO SARTORIUS  
EDITING: DAVID HORN  
MUSIC: DAVID HORN  
RATED: PG-13  
RUNNING TIME: 110 MINUTES

### The phrase

'neighbourhood watch' measures a whole new meaning when you're a Palestinian widow and the Israeli defense minister moves in next door. Popping over the Green Line border to borrow some sugar isn't really on the cards. And anyway, doubtless it would require rather more than that to neutralise the bitter relations between Salma (Hiam Abbass) and the minister's military entourage, who promptly announce plans to bulldoze over her modest lemon grove (her sole source of income), dubbing it 'an absolute and immediate military necessity.'

To say that *Lemon Tree* is based on a true story is largely redundant. It's so painfully banal and trite as such, a next metaphor for the Israeli-

Palestinian situation that one is almost overcome by weary resignation before the opening credits are over.

While plainer exposing the insanity of Israel's security measures and the horrific injustices they result in, *Lemon Tree*, as with Ricci's best-known feature, 1999's *Cup Final* and 2004's *The Syrian Bride*, tells its lesson in textbook even-handedness. So, Abbass' affecting performance is mirrored by the defense minister's wife Mira (Karine Lissner-McNulty), who observes Salma's plight with sympathy; with her attempts to challenge the military order through the Israeli courts. Both are lonely women whose children have fled the nest, and the film is at its most interesting in its

sensitive study of this juncture of women's lives (which would make a fine subject in its own right). One particularly moving moment sees Salma, unexpectedly entranced by a budding romance with her militarily young lawyer Ziad (Al-Saifan), release her long-drawn finely from feather pillow stuffing.

It's a shame, then, that the uneven tone, if not the plot, sometimes descends into an instant Dan Drakovich-style women-against-the-system drama, despite Ziad's heartfelt protestation that "only American movies have happy endings."

Rida should be praised for bringing together a cast and crew of mixed ethnicity yet has identified quest to universalise this narrative through the film's path. It opens with an evocative shot

sequence of lemon picking, charmingly evoked with the lyrics of the Peter, Paul & Mary song "Lemon tree very pretty and the lemon flower is sweet, but the fruit of the poor lemon is impossible to eat." Ricci's film, however well intentioned and presented, is similarly hard to swallow despite

Anticipation:  
Scopet the *Wallace*  
Award at the Berlinale  
to look promising. For

Enjoyment:  
A interesting study of a country where the personal is political. This

In Retrospect:  
Because a bad  
affectionate. The

## BODY OF LIES

REVIEW BY  
MARK HARRIS

DEBUTS OF DIRECTOR  
JOSEPH LITERATO AND  
PRODUCER RANDY SHAW

### The deadliest weapons

in the war on terror aren't guns, grenades and tanks. They're BlackBerrys, e-mails and satellites. Ridley Scott's *Body of Lies* takes its place in the pantheon of Hollywood tech-thrillers straining hard for political relevance. But Steven Monaghan's dense screenplay overflows with characters, subplots and details that ratchet up the confusion and deserve the excitement.

What it does have is a trio of mostly performances. Leonardo DiCaprio is the CIA man in the Middle East; Russell Crowe is the doughty intelligence chief who tracks his progress from Langley. Together they plan to lure with

Sergeant Al-Saleem (Ali Al-Babas) out of hell.

Crowe has little to do, but DiCaprio gives a committed performance that almost eclipses his boyish looks, although it's still hard to buy him butting heads with some of the world's most dangerous men. Especially when one of those men is Jordache, intelligence chief Marc Strong. Engaged in a battle of wit and will with DiCaprio, Strong is effortlessly dangerous and charming — and he blows Leo off the screen.

Ridley Scott does his fair share of that too. As if forced by the mucky plot progression, he punctuates the movie with some truly consummate set-pieces. He



also throws in a thrilling duel between attack helicopters, a rocket launcher and a pair of trucks racing through the desert.

But none of it's enough to give the film the momentum it needs to pull off a sweep of desolate. Monaghan's script inherits a similar problem to the one he wrote for *South of Heaven*: too much talk, not enough agency. Complex and serious it might be, but we need a deeper dig into the moral mess of

the War on Terror. Jonathan Cainer

**Anticipation:** Great cast, but Ridley Scott seems to be fading. **Enjoyment:** Tally and convincing despite knowing weaknesses. **Time:**

In Retrospect: *Quarantine* may be owing a debt to *Contagion*, but Mark Ruffalo has definitely excelled. **Time:**

## QUARANTINE

REVIEW BY  
MARK HARRIS

DIRECTED BY  
JORDACHE  
STORY BY  
STEVE HORN

Here, for once, is a film that truly captures the essence of its culture's surroundings. Not, as some might argue, because it's a first-person horror with socio-political undertones. But, rather, because it's an identikit remake of a movie that was only released last year. Sorry, have even seen fit to include the title of the film in their own trailer; how ill they need to do is somewhere turn it into an iPhone application and we'll have 2020 in a nutshell.

Other sentiment aside, *Quarantine* is a fairly uneventful thrill ride. A complete reconstitution it may be, but at least director John Covich and his team are plundering from decent source material. Apart from an extended opening sequence,

this is essentially a full-scale recreation of the slinky-com Spanish shooter (*MDC*), in which we follow a young TV presenter (Jennifer Carpenter) as she sets about shadowing a team of fire fighters, experiencing the action through the eyes — or rather the video-camera — of her attendant cameraman (Steve Horns).

An emergency callout brings the group to an apartment block downtown, where events take in *Night of the Living Dead*-style fun for the worse. Surprisingly banal, this situation seems even less credible than the giant monster scenario of *Cloverfield*, but at least the perspective is handled with a reduced degree of nausea-inducing Shake-a-Vision. The buildings' zombie-like densities are hideously gruesome,



while the grim atmosphere is helped significantly by the tight arrangement of some basic set-pieces — particularly the dead-inducing arrival of master figure in foamed suits.

At just under 90 minutes, *Quarantine* is a nimble horror that packs plenty of suspense moments into its relatively brief runtime. There are several good ideas on display here, yet it's hard to forget that most of them were originally someone else's. Despite its technical proficiency

the film is symptomatic of a wider problem: a lack of creativity that can't be ignored. **Time:**

**Anticipation:** Another remake, but at least the original *Cloverfield* was... **Enjoyment:** Nicely and excessive. **Time:**

In Retrospect: Hell yeah, but a rather overblown... **Time:**



## THE GIRL IN THE PARK

**Rating:** ★★★½ **Length:** 100 mins **Genre:** Drama **Director:** John Michael McDonagh **Cast:** Jim Sturgess, Jaimie Alexander, David Thewlis



## THE WARLORDS

**Rating:** ★★★½ **Length:** 130 mins **Genre:** Action **Director:** Ziyi Zhang **Cast:** Andy Lau, Takeshi Kaneshiro, Li Yuchun

**Sixteen years after her daughter is snatched from the park,** Julie (Sigourney Weaver) has never recovered – strangled from her remaining family, and friendless in her high-powered job. Then young, beautiful but terminally baby Louise (Kate Bosworth) enters her life and gradually things improve. Weaver's performance is commendably brittle and guarded, and the jolty shooting and sombre lighting enhance her uncomfortable relationships with everyone around her. Yet the premise begins to wear thin as the film becomes overlong and repetitive, and the character of Louise also grows – the studiously eccentric, boulded but oh-so attractive young girl being an overexposed stereotypical thesis drags. *Peterloo Key*

## Three of Asian cinema's biggest stars collide

In this big-budget battle epic set during China's brutal nineteenth-century civil war, Army General Jet Li, bandit leader Andy Lau and his confidante Takeshi Kaneshiro swear blood-brotherhood oaths and go about turning the tide of the conflict. Too often a bland exercise in Hollywood, Li becomes a different creature when acting in his own language, and *The Warlords* honours him with some terrific fight sequences. But despite the actors providing a compelling human angle to the dusty, doleful drama, the script isn't quite strong enough to sustain the 130-minute runtime. It's no surprise to find that eight screenwriters had a crack at it. *Jordan Cawthron*



## INKHEART

**Rating:** ★★½ **Length:** 118 mins **Genre:** Fantasy **Director:** Michael Spierig, Peter Spierig **Cast:** Ewan McGregor, Maggie Gyllenhaal, Isla Fisher



## OUTLANDERS

**Rating:** ★★½ **Length:** 118 mins **Genre:** Thriller **Director:** John Lola **Cast:** Helen Mirren, Alan Alda, Paul Bettany, Andy Serkis

**Superior fantasy fodder based on the bestselling novel by German author Cornelia Funke,** *Inkheart* is a short, sharp and sweet Christmas diversion about a top-hatted, visual-crippled red-beer (Brendan Fraser) who has the power to bring characters from classic literature to life when he reads out loud. In doing so, however, his courageous wife has been sucked into the pages of *Ickeknot*, and he must travel to a Germanic village to do battle with the book's repulsive villains. Part of what makes Ian McEwan's film such a treat is the very ill dispensing with cutesy explanations in favour of getting to the heart of the story, which sees Andy Serkis, Paul Bettany and (especially) Helen Mirren all deliver large portions of finely-honed ham. *Alan Madsen*

**A lack of decent colour grading betrays the low budget of Cormac Lenn's debut about the plight of Polish workers in the UK,** and gives the movie the look of a film school project. There are only two shots in which Lenn uses the form itself to convey meaning. One is an Eisensteinian juxtaposition at the start of the film, when, in Warsaw, Adams (Leszek Tolałik) terminally ill father dies at the exact moment that his son is watching a video of his brother Jan's (Przemysław Sadowski) career-ending football injury. Jan's fall on the pitch also prefigures his fall off it, as Adam travels to London to discover that the brother he once looked up to is now the head of a gang supplying illegal labour to the construction industry. *Karenna Peartree*



## RIVALS

**Rating:** PG-13 **Length:** 104 min. **Release date:** June 17 **Starring:** Jeanne Moreau, Isabelle Adjani, Sophie Marceau, Guillaume Canet, François Cluzet, Anne Parillaud, Daniel Auteuil, and Gérard Depardieu.

**Lyon, the late 1970s.** Police Inspector François (Guillaume Canet) learns that his brother, Gabriel (François Cluzet), has been released from prison after serving 10 years for murder. There's no happy reunion but an uneasy agreement to draw a line under the past. However, real life and former demons are soon in pursuit, and the siblings find the paths they choose to follow leading them to the same tragic conclusion. *Rivales* is a slowly engrossing police drama that echoes *Melville* and *Danton*. The narrative feels a little overhanded, but there is compensation to be found in the first-rate performances – with Cluzet establishing a reputation as one of French cinema's finest leads – and the vividly realized period setting. *Anne Raso*



## THE SECRET LIFE OF BEES

**Rating:** PG-13 **Length:** 110 min. **Release date:** June 24 **Starring:** Dakota Fanning, Alfre Woodard, and Bessie Coleman.

**Lily (Dakota Fanning)** is 14-years-old. On top of the trials of adolescence, she has an abusive father to contend with, and is haunted by memories of accidentally shooting her mother as an infant. Much of the film's focus is on Fanning's precocious performances, and yet the surrounding story of the black women with whom Lily finds solace is far more interesting. A group of intelligent, independent sisters fighting their own small battles in the Civil Rights movement. August (Queen Latifah), June (Alfre Woodard) and May (Bessie Coleman) are smartly dressed, softly spoken, bee-keeping women. If it is their performances, especially Keys' superb elegance and restraint, that prevent the film becoming a total schmaltz-fest. *Peter Travers*



## SUMMER

**Rating:** PG-13 **Length:** 104 min. **Release date:** June 24 **Starring:** Robert Carlyle, Steve Coogan, and Anna Friel.

**Shaun** is a teenage boy fuelled by booze and lust who embarks on the most eventful summer of his life. As typical disadvantaged youths he, his girlfriend Katy and their best friend Daz spend their days making and dodging trouble. Cut to the present day and Shaun (Robert Carlyle) is a full-time carer to the now disabled Daz (Steve Coogan), whose worsening disease forces Shaun to confront the events of his past. Rather than wallow in the depths of a turbulent adolescence, *Summer* plays out its story as a multi-generational tale of love, youth and friendship. Thanks to Glennson's sensitive direction and Robert Carlyle's suit-of-the-earth charm, it's both an affecting and sensitive drama. *Anna Friel*



## DEAN SPANLEY

**Rating:** PG-13 **Length:** 104 min. **Release date:** June 24 **Starring:** Sam Neill, Peter O'Toole, and Jennifer Northwood-Roberts.

**In his previous life,** Dean Spanley (Sam Neill) lived in a spiral. When plied with his favorite booze, he goes melt-eyed and recounts the pleasures of wrangling sheep. Fisk Junier (Jennifer Northwood-Roberts) is a cattlemen's-aid trigger who refuses to guess the death of his son, having previously lost a beloved dog. This is the rather ludicrous setup for *Too Fierce's* bittersweet comedy, but if it's a premise you can swallow you'll probably enjoy the whole nipping yarn. The biter is quietly pitiful, and the drift story eventually builds to a surprisingly moving conclusion, thanks largely to yet another masterful turn from O'Toole. *Menk Kelly*

12 LIVES

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# In Profile

# Chuck Palahniuk CP 21/02/1962

WORDS BY AILSA CAINE  
PORTRAIT BY SAM CHRISTMAS

## WISE WORDS

A conversation with Chuck Palahniuk should be an enlightening experience. As the author of *Fight Club*, *Choke* and *Beyond Malice*, he has produced novels that have 'academic classes' stamp all over them. His work is bold, direct and visceral – perfect for passing off Middle America. In the flesh one might expect an amateurish amateur, past *Jakob Rosine*, past *Tyler Durden*. But Chuck Palahniuk is neither.

Chuck Palahniuk is a mess – almost depressingly so. He sits quietly on his, in itself spiky and pale, sofa. He can also sit cross-legged, eyes fixed on the laptop at his favorite book (*The Great Gatsby*) or his affection for '70s movies.

*Choke* is the latest of Palahniuk's novels to be adapted for the screen. It's classic stuff – *V For Vendetta* (played by James McAvoy) is a social-activist struggle, with his inability to form relationships a subplot. Add in

that a mentally unstable mother figure, and you have a great study of human behaviour. The relevance of the adaptation has not escaped Palahniuk. "Recently I was reading that around 85 per cent of college men use internet pornography as a regular habit," he says. "I found confirmation my young sons are finding to make situations as ludicrous as possible because attainable pornography is changing the depth with which people interact. And that seems so much like Vito in *Choke*. I wonder if people will reach a moment of crisis when they realize that they're fulfilled, and that crisis will generate a delayed emotional attachment of greater strength."

It seems Palahniuk is not the nihilist that some critics would peg against. Indeed, the society he so happily dismisses still holds the occasional surprise. "When

people tell me who they think of my work it's usually shocking because it says more about them than my material. I was on a plane to LA once and a male flight attendant came up to me and said, 'Are you the *Fight Club* guy?' And I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'Would you tell me the result if I gave the shirt?' He said, 'Fight Club is really about gay backboomers, it's about gay guys touching each other in public, isn't it?' I realized he was talking about his experiences, and I was so shocked that I told him he was right and asked him to keep it a secret. He was so happy."

An industry where people use cheap tricks to sell their books/film/whatever, Palahniuk's open mind is refreshing. He appears more interested in the exploration of human behaviour than earning a six-figure sum. After all, it's the readers who cause the fun. "The strongest emotion is art."

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material is in a way country where it doesn't have to be translated, but after that it's an repressed culture. *Piglet Cloth* was enormous among the Mormon population. Young Mormons used to loved *Piglet Cloth* and at a gift would run right down to Mormon churches and buy themselves. I'm told that the books are really popular in Russia."

So how does Palahniuk feel about these comparisons? "It's too big to digest, it's like biting a 500-pound chunk of chocolate – it's so big you don't even cry or sputter, it's just there."

Perhaps it's a fear of such reactions – of his popularity becoming too big, the chocolate causing him rather than the other way around – that drives Palahniuk to push at the boundaries of social acceptability. When he first attempts to publish a novel was met by rejection for being too disturbing, he reacted by

penning *Piglet Cloth*, partly in an attempt to thwart the publisher further. It's the legacy of rebellion that's given the author his cult appeal. His answer, though, is not simply to shake up the status quo. "The idea is to take something from your own life that's frightening and unacceptable and write a story around that issue through a metaphor. If the issue you're down writing the book you've exploded and you're ahead of the issue and you're no longer attached to it. At that point the issue disappears."

Hiding from the heat where the therapist is king, it would seem clear, Palahniuk is not averse to "working through his problems". But it's his fear that his issues are personal rather than a case against dysopian society that puts some fire out of him, though: "he's not scared pleasure." "It's not about writing something to be liked, it's more important to write

something that will be remembered, that will really trouble people and be in their memory for long period of time. If something can linger in the culture long enough as memory, eventually public tone will change to enhance it."

As he believes over the final days of his tour, Palahniuk sums up his vision of our world and his work: "I don't want to dictate a outcome, but if I had to hope that someone would get something out of reading my work, it would be the idea that our lives are self-determined. That if we have any hope of redeeming ourselves, it's through accepting mortality, and being able to sacrifice what we have to achieve something better. All my books are about people risking revealing themselves to one other person, and in doing so, finding courage." A conversation with Chuck Palahniuk is an enlightening experience.

# MICHAEL FASSBENDER

*anger is the making of him*

## FEEDING ON FAME

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### Words

### Matt

### Bochenski

Hollywood types don't talk about an actor's "heat." Right now, you need someone just to look at Michael Fassbender's CV. Post-*127* (he was the blind one with, he claims, the least amount of sun-park enhancement), the projects have come thick and fast. *Peppermint*, Green's *Agent*, Benicio's *Border*, *Eden*, *Levi*, and a couple of smaller fare, *Jail*, *Chromatherapy* and *Anderson*.

For Fassbender, the key to success isn't just down but *Bogey*, Steve McQueen's brilliant debut. He gives a compelling performance as the uneducated hanger-on to the Bobby Sands, demanding that the Thatcher government recognize IRA inmates in the Maze as political prisoners.

"It's a risky role for the writer, with no guarantee that his lyrical efforts would be rewarded by a first-time director. But Fassbender had faith in McQueen. "Five minutes in a room with Steve and you realize that you're going to learn something from the guy," he says. "I don't use the word 'talent,' but I think he's a genius."

Besides, Fassbender had enough to worry about without second-guessing his director. The later half of the film deals with the hunger strike itself, a harrowing partner of the physical aftereffects of starvation. To prepare himself for the role, he decamped in Ed for a 10-week diet that cut his intake of calories first to 2000 then 800 a day. The average recommended daily intake for men is 3500 calories.

Contrary to expectations, however, apart from a two-week period of insomnia, Fassbender felt good. "[I]t's really focused, really content, really a coup,"

he says. Indeed, despite the dangers of rapid weight loss (he was on a strict medical restriction to go no lower than 14 kilos, he got down to 10), neither chair dancing, nor stand-up, longer opened his eyes. "We live in this country where I want something, I take it. But it – it's so easy and easily available," he says. "When you take all that away, you actually become more appreciative of the things around you. I don't want to do it again, but there is a level where I consider you in a good way."

While *Bogey* is a detailed portrait of the last days of Sands' life, the film also has bigger things in mind. It's impossible to write the story the IRA prisoners are treated in the Maze without the mind's eye straying to Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib. To Fassbender, whether you're talking about the IRA or Al Qaeda, it's a question of understanding. "You can't put everyone in a prison to 'test' or 'assess' – there's no motivation, there's a history. We've all waded up of the same material, and we need to start trying to face up to those things and understand them and not label them as something we can just off in the end zone."

That is a noble statement, whether *Bogey* can cut through the hyperion in a different manner. What's not in doubt is that this harrowing film announces that Michael Fassbender is a major new player.

*Bogey* is reviewed on page 72

*Read online to check out the full transcript at [www.ew.com/127](http://www.ew.com/127)*

## GAMING

Behind the scenes of *James Bond 007: Quantum of Solace*

# BOND, GAMES BOND

By Jennifer Gruber / Photos by Matt Killeen

## Words

## Ed

## Andrews

For years, the gaming world has been plagued by the motto: "We can't compete with the latest film from Universal." Posture is irrelevant; it seems that gaming has become synonymous with the marketing opportunity for film studios to sell a movie's licensing potential – the equivalent of a media book on a digital age. But with games such as *Grand Theft Auto* now grossing more in a year than Hollywood blockbusters, the medium is being taken far more seriously, with development budgets to match. *Lifeline* spoke to Adam Guassman, Co-Design Director of the game. "They continually forced our gaming decisions just needs before deadlines to fit with the rest of the movie," he says. "Therefore, it's not surprising that most turn out to be crap." With that in mind, Trepak has spent two and a half years on the project, and according to the studio's celebrated *Call of Duty* game engine, an unexpected break with the established norm.

*James Bond* contains a lecture and therefore highly protected dialogue. Trepak worked closely with Bond家 Ian Fleming, Barbara Broccoli and Georg Wilmann to ensure that the video game experience remained authentic to its 46-year history. "They know things about Bond that we would never think of," says Guassman. "We had to cut one scene where there was much bawling across the street. They insisted that Bond wouldn't have that – people don't

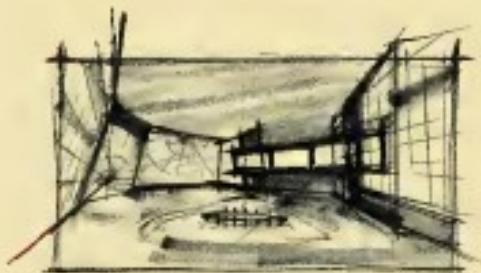
want to see him surrounded by people they want to see him in a costume."

It was working so closely with the *Q*-men's producer that has made the project much more a creative collaboration than merely a licensed product. As well as having access to the film's script, assets and making several visits to the set at Pinewood Studios, Trepak also studied in the film's cast, including Daniel Craig, Judi Dench and Martina Hiller, who lent both their voices and likenesses to the game. "There's always a risk when you're having a creative talent but it's very beneficial because you know you're going to get a great score," says Guassman. "Having an in-game character is a real nice marker because as you are able to propose what they look like and how they act. The actors already have the character developed, so we better know how to animate them and expand on it."

Such strictures are detailed first. Because standard argosies demand an "depth, plotlines, complex characters and well-defined worlds," *James Bond 007: Quantum of Solace* director Roland Emmerich goes the rule over 10 hours of cut content, a new maximum benchmark for gaming. According to Guassman, this is very much the focus, but only where budget permits. "The more cinematic content you put in, the larger it makes to make a game. It takes thousands of people to produce a movie, and it takes the same with a game. Nowadays, you've got to make sure that cinematic content is available, but also skipable. We do have a lot of movie elements in the game, but if you don't want to see it, you can just press a button and get straight on with the action."

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A rainy Tuesday morning in King'sbridge seems an unlikely place to meet the real life Mr. Bond, but it is here, on a quiet roadhouse, that Ken Adam, the production designer who made his name working with Stanley Kubrick and the Bond franchise in the '60s and '70s, now lives and works.

The interior of the elegantly packed, sparsely used and the one occasion he had never seen iconic costumes, including the James Martin speech suit, Adam was a trained architect and World War II pilot who combined practical expertise with a wildly imaginative creativity to make the seemingly impossible look practical, as in *Dr Strangelove*, *Goldfinger* and *Dr No*.

Alongside *Dr Strangelove* and *Goldfinger*, Adam created the precision, futuristic film aesthetic now associated with Cold War era design. The disconcertingly dark, angular, high-gloss look of his sets has become cultural shorthand for a certain type of power, luxury, megalomaniac, and has inspired the decoration of many

a bachelor pad worldwide.

The groundbreaking look of his sets is celebrated in a new book, *Ken Adam Design: The Movie*, published by Thames & Hudson and available now.

We spoke to him exclusively about the iconoclast and eccentricities that define his work. Prudence Ivey

### DR STRANGELOVE WAR ROOM

"I had come up with a war room set. Stanley liked it very much so I thought it was my working with Kubrick. Two or three weeks later he said, 'I'm afraid you have got to start again.' I think the War Room was one of the best designs I ever did because it fit so well with the dramatic storyplay. The actors did it home and inspired. We didn't have computer-generated stuff so I designed the maps on elephant-sized drawing boards, pasted them on a plywood background, cut out where the symbols

were going to move and put lights behind them, controlled by switches. Very simple."

### GOLDFINGER FORT KNOX, 1964

"A completely impractical design, but it worked. United Artists got over 100 press letters saying how wonderful a British film unit was allowed to film inside Fort Knox when the President of the United States is not allowed inside."

### YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE VOLCANO HQ, 1967

"This was the biggest set ever built in England at the time, on the lot at Pinewood. It was quite expensive; we spent over six million dollars on it. The producers had everyone look around our studio and they were saying it cost £1 million so they thought it would be more impressive."

Check out [www.kenadamdesign.com](http://www.kenadamdesign.com) to win an exclusive copy of the book signed by Ken

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25 CAPSULES

## LOOKING BACK OVER TIFF '08

When is Toronto not Toronto?

T2

WORDS BY SOPHIE MAYER

It's hard to say what was the cleanest Biennale Emperor's bigger building, the Royal York Hotel, which achieved cinematic greatness as an icon like the New York Park Plaza, in *Shots at the Plaza*. It's been called New York City by the Swiss, and "Toronto the Good" too, every Reptember, Toronto puts on its glitz and attracts the best of the best. Biennale was good this year – especially for Portuguese films – as were audiences (including all those people at weekday matinees who'd taken the week off work to festival), which is now apparently a trend, with even the experimental programs, *Wavelengths*, selling out for the second year in a row, ending as a high note with Jennifer Reeder's gorgous *When It Was Mine*, and a live score from Icelandic musician Sólheiður Þórsson, who'd flown in from Rio de Janeiro despite severe delays and last-minute warnings.

What with breaking ground on the Bell Lightbox (opened with Cassavetes' Oscar-nom "To Build a Home" in the pre-screening slot), TIFF '08 was

a big, buoyant festival. The anti-party (or pre-party?) "Bierfest" that kicked off screenings last year seems to be on the wane, but the round of applause for volkstheater is still loose-limbed and well deserved. Several friends raved about the Yveson N'Doum free concert in Yonge-Dundas Square, where the legendary Steppenwolf axeman was introduced by Spike Lee; three different stagons recommended the galore from Wild Things w/ Hartwood and Berlin, and a group of students offered to worship your reporter for having had brunch with Agnes Varda.

Varda's *Le Meilleur des Années* (definitely not her last film, despite Sandie Biberon's claim in the LFF programme, as she admitted she was already working on a series of screenplays) showed up as just a sliver-light of the festival, but a must-see if you're in town, coming complete with a history of the Aragon Theatre Festival, a beach outside Varda's Paris flat, some gondolas pointing in the water where she grew up, and a very animated Chris Marker

Combining whimsy with melancholia as grief, *Le Meilleur des Années* is no simple feel-good film, but on the nose for a festival where serious topics made a comeback. Treated fondly (as in *Born After Raining*), satirically (*Blinding Melancholia*, *Blue*) or unrelentingly (as in *Dangerous Liaisons*, *Shattered*), it was as much business as usual.

The smaller films like *Surfacing* (Albert Serra), *Maman au Cliv & Cie* (Lila Pooj) and *Rain* (Marc Garneau) found serious joy. As Nancycilla hangs around Miami in *After Tomorrow*, "The dark is friends with the light." That film, which won the CTV Best Canadian Feature Feature prize, is a vital image of filmmaking never directed by an all-female collective. A movie that is instant in (Gleekland and Pavarotti), screened in their communities before playing at TIFF, funded by regional and national governments, and make the hearts of an urban, one might even say cynical, audience. Although it's no longer called the Festival of Fools, TIFF will open Toronto to the world.



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# MUSIC RESPONSE

ThinkSync provides filmmaking food for thought

T8

WORDS BY MATT BOCHENSKI

Thundyne Films is giving up for its fourth annual competition. Designing a brief independent filmmakers and musicans together, Thundyne encourages them filmmakers to download free tracks from its website, recording a short video film that makes the most compelling use of music or its sound track. There is a multitude of grants

available from electric racks to acoustic, and the website is also a valuable resource for anybody looking to amalgamate areas that often share the same art form.

Says Thundyne co-founder Oli Barbuti: "Thundyne Films' commitment to be unique is that it is the only competition to encourage and reward the use of music

within the short film format. In addition, by having the support of so many great independent music labels, the competition is special in the way it brings together the indie music and film industries so closely in collaboration." Here, hear [www.thundynefilms.com](http://www.thundynefilms.com)

# DIGITAL DREAMWORLD

onedotzero rocks the Southbank

07

WORDS BY DANNY BANGS

From November 16–18, onedotzero are taking over London's Southbank to stage a celebration of all things digital in the film making universe. This year, we're promised "an inspiring mix of typical, perverse, nonpedantic programmes of international short film, animation, live cinematic performances and educational collaborations," as well as "provocative new ideas from the up-and-coming moving

image stars of tomorrow; along with exciting new work by renowned filmmakers."

With a night filled firmly under its belt (as has with the BFI Southbank's 25th anniversary celebrations), the festival will welcome the likes of 17-year-old director Josie Curtis, and, more broadly, will take the idea of 'caveman' art to an offbeat butchering. Most intriguingly, musical pioneer Nitzer

Elektricity will be performing an acoustic set from his new album.

As Share Wilson, founder and CEO of onedotzero, explains: "This year's festival is a continually evolving explosion with renewed energy and unique thematic directions. We have very much lined up."

Check out [www.onedotzero.com](http://www.onedotzero.com) for a full festival breakdown.



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# DVD MINISTRY

PERFORMED BY GEORGIE ROBES (STORE IN A DRY PLACE)

## DVD OF THE MONTH

### THE RED DESERT (1964)

DIR: MICHELANGELO ANTONIONI

AVAILABLE: NOW

Winner of the Golden Lion at the 1964 Venice Film Festival, *The Red Desert* was Antonioni's first foray into colour, and it's never looked more beautiful than in this new high-definition restoration from the BFI.

Staring post-industrial Italy as its backdrop, *The Red Desert* tells the story of Giuliana (Muschka Verdi), a factory worker's wife who has been emotionally damaged by her accident. The first time we see her, Giuliana's pale green soul makes her stand out against the dark grey tones of the factory. That unstable image is symbolic of her relationships: her reverentness (she's detached, all alone); her desire, as her husband Ugo (Carlo Chionetti) describes her, "to... attack".

He, on the other hand, appears perfectly suited to this new world of cold, scientific industry. Although not against industrialisation per se, Antonioni was concerned with its social effects – which people it would necessarily leave behind – and later blamed Ugo's character in a letter:

The plot is driven by Giuliana's fateful meeting with Cesare, her husband's business associate, played by a brooding young Richard Harris. Antonioni's elliptical style plays out clearly here in somewhat confusing fragments, only partly explained by the fact that we share Giuliana's point of view. In her fragile, angst-ridden voice, colours come to meaning, emotions fragment.

In several shots, Antonioni has her eyes to the point the landscape greys to achieve the film's damp, dulled appearance

of post-war factories of long ago, such as the factory's painted rails and tracks, power station generators or starting effect. Although the director himself found the industrialised world strangely beautiful, through Giuliana's eyes and ours it's perceived as something frightening and alien. The only escape comes from a self-contained episode within the film, in which Giuliana is taking her son a walk. Depicting a young girl on an idyllic beach, she is the only sequence that doesn't use filters, spotty or electronic noise.

All too soon we're plucked back into Giuliana's unstable reality. As the iron on the bank of water, clinging to walls and the necessity of affection, you can't help but share the sense of wimpiness, and it all gets a bit tiring. This gives an impressive performance but, as one reviewer has remarked, "Is how many steps, and for how long, can one sugar say?"

The pacing is understandably tortuous at times, and the disappointingly one-film 'sughi' scene may leave audience members wanting. On the other hand, Tari never loses her luminous screen presence, and there's a fine figure to her rescuer Cesare (no wonder they're a lookalike couple). And if you like a good light, there's even a look of Daniel Craig about him.

From every angle, *The Red Desert* is pure about beauty of an experience as a high point in modern cinema. A radical experiment in colour and sound, many critics have lauded it as a film about colour itself. But there's more to it than that. Antonioni wasn't overtly concerned with the nervous and feline of industrialisation, but his depiction of the damage it inflicts on an individual will stay with you long after the colours have faded. *Sally Horner*

HOW THE WEST WAS WON (1962)

MRS. JOHN FORD, HENRY HATHAWAY.

**GEORGE MARSHALL**

**AVAILABLE NOW**

Not as much history of the West, more an unbroken celebration of the western, this grand epic was major history for a wide circle of four generations of New Englanders hearing powder at mouth of a barrel or less. Showing a quite fierce oil war scene including John Wayne, George Peck, James Stewart and Henry Fonda—and directed by Henry Hathaway, John Ford and George Marshall—that is a conclusion. Technically superb though an aging and American literary work proud and writhing Indians, the Pamp Express, the coming of the railroad and the Civil War all duly and effectively mythologized. *Newspaper Quotations*

CALIFORNIA DREAMIN' (2007)

**OB: CHRISTIAN NEMESCU**

**THE CLASSIC TRAINING  
AVAILABLE NOW**

Based as it was on a true story, this Romanian film is a dramatically observed, moving and at times highly depressing depiction of the fury of military law in the face of small town policies. A group of NATO soldiers, headed for the Serbian border, are brought to a halt by the corrupt plotting of the town's old official. As each newest green way to his basecamp and his homeland, the townspeople between the American express (played by Armand Assante), and the Romanian bureaucrats become destroying. Neagu's editing is dead-pant two steps before the final cut makes the film's position all the more poignant. And the last scene might appear in face of the severely commented design can be held a certain indecision of the narrative. *Ned Frost*

#### THE NIGHT THEY RAIDED MINNIE'S (1953)

SIR WILLIAM FRIEDKIN

**AVAILABLE NOW**

This is a classic, but nevertheless charming, tribute to the 1930s bourgeoisie scene in New York's Lower East Side. The plot follows a lecherous and easygoing doctor (Bert Randolph) who grasps and baiters her patients at a series of unlikely events one evening in Monkoff's theater. William Powell's direction is clunky and at times exasperating and at times, and the less said about the story the better, but the sparkling central performances of Jason Robards and Norma Westen as a querulous country duo, coupled with the film's amorous, bawdy and pure, more than make up for its occasional *lock, stock*.

BUDHHA CRILL APSED BUT RE SHAME (2007)

©IB: HANA MAXIMAL-BAE

AVAILABLE NOVEMBER 10

To a backlog of substance farming in today's Afghanistan, we see which transience one year old seems to gain an education. In finding herself elsewhere at the head schools, and with nowhere else to turn, the truants as a group of boys playing. They are the 'Babwai', and she, a girl with pretty eyes, no 'adult' discerning of punishment. Her shallow dog day, she's resulted for death by stoning and a paper bag 'death mask' is forced on her head. Justice is not an option. Eventually distraught, that is another man capable from the hukum of mullahs and family, whose combined efforts have come and gone so well. *Given* 1945



# Lett There Be Punk!

**WORDS BY JAY CLIFTON**

CAPSULES CONTAIN ALTOSYNCSPAM 30MG  
50 CAPSULES

Dave Letts' 1978 documentary, *The Punk Rock Movie*, is an up-close-and-personal portrait of the bands and people at the centre of the London punk scene circa 1976. Made on a shoestring budget using a Super 8 camera to record interviews and vehicle audience-based interaction during performances, it's a classic example of successful underground documentary filmmaking. As the film is released for the first time on DVD to mark its thirtieth anniversary, *LWL81* speaks exclusively to the filmmaker.

**LWL81:** What inspired you to start filming?  
**Lett:** The punk rock movement was very much about audience participation; it wasn't a spectator sport. The energy was so infectious that you wanted to go involved. I'd seen films a few years previously called *The Harder They Come* (Peter Rουll, 1972), a very famous Jamaican film, and realized I wanted to express myself in some kind of visual way, but I couldn't do a soap fணion. When the punk rock thing happened in about 1976, the whole 'do it yourself' principle came into play. All my mates picked up guitars and I wanted to pick up something too, but the stage was kind of filling. So I picked up a Super 8 camera, and using that DIY principle taught myself to become a filmmaker. I'd never been to film school; I never even read the instructions for the camera.

**LWL81:** Did you have a documentary model in mind when you were filming, what would become *The Punk Rock Movie*?

**Lett:** Honestly not. I had nothing in mind other than being able to capture what was happening in front of me. Super-

8mm didn't have all the same facilities that we've got today. But I found that it's good for discipline. Now with digital technology you can buy a \$50-an-hour DVD recorder for a fever and get coverage of everything. But that's not good for discipline at all. It was better when things were more expensive. The downside of affordable technology is mediocrity. Just because you can afford it, doesn't mean you can do it. Ultimately you need a good idea.

**LWL81:** Did you consider yourself an artist or an outsider to the scene?

**Lett:** I wouldn't have got the scenes that I did unless those people trusted me. My relationship with the bands helped to make it what it was. No one ever told me to cover the cameras off, but then they didn't have to because I'd done what I had to do. We were all on the same page, and there was a mutual trust.

**LWL81:** Would you still be able to make that kind of documentary today, given the very young bands we see now, shepherded by managers and spokespeople like Lotti? These days, record companies rule. There's a spectrum of music that operates outside of that, but for the bands that have record companies behind them... and PR... and the A&R and so on... all those people telling them what not to do - the result is that bands are scared to have an opinion because they believe it might affect their record sales. There has to be access going to, say, some other agents that just trying to big push and run people into passive consumerism. That's why I don't make music videos so much anymore, because all they want to do now is tell the record.

**LWL81:** Thirty years before punk there was Miles Davis and he-dope. It's now 10 years since *The Punk Rock Movie* was first released - does it seem as though it's an unusual era as he-dope in your, or do you think punk has kept its cultural relevance?

**Lett:** All counter-cultural movements eventually become part of popular culture, until the next generation comes along. In 1969, punk had got kind of ridiculous and trashed, and a lot of the main ingredients actually survived themselves from it and became part of the whole post-punk scene, which I think actually was a lot more interesting. So what we're talking about is a kind of ongoing dynamic that does have a lineage and a continuity. Although you might wonder where that continuity has gone because as far as the counterculture, actually now in the West it feels like punk never happened. When I got into music it was an anti-establishment thing. Now's a lot of people get into music to become part of the establishment. How many can you be if that's what you want? Hearing said that, I know there are young people out there who don't want what MTV or the Top 40 radio is offering, and they've got the internet now, which gives them the ability and the facility to express themselves and get their ideas out there. So that's kind of encouraging. If you look beneath the surface there's always something going on. "Punk sci-fi" is like *The Force Is With You*... you can't stop it but you do have to look in new places, it's out there.

Check our [www.filmbuff.com.au](http://www.filmbuff.com.au) for  
yourself or 10 copies of *The Punk Rock Movie* on DVD.

## THE ANIMALS FILM (1981)

DIRS: MYRIAM ALAUX, VICTOR SCHONFELD  
AVAILABLE: NOW

Made when "reggaeton" was still a dirty word, this horrific documentary exposes the rise and fall of animals in the food, pharmaceutical and beauty industry. Still relevant 27 years on, and now with a new director's cut, the filmmakers' roaming cameras take viewers into vivisection labs and onto the cold streets of New York, where live dead dogs are quoted on their skins. Bitterly pessimistic courtesy of David Byrne and Alanis Morissette, Julie Christie doesn't make watching animal torture any easier, but certainly had the spiky perfume we craved. Extras include an interview with Victor Schonfeld. *George Ryba*



## BABYLON (1980)

DIR: FRANCO ROSSO  
AVAILABLE: NOW

Biggus, duff and social problems collide in the powerful tale of black youth in the '60s, colored the year before the Beatles roared back the capital and the consciousness of the nation. Reminiscent of classic James Dean flick *The Rebel*, *Babylon* tells the story of a young mixed-race crew from south London, and their struggle to escape prejudice and poverty through music. Black rock patois and garage sounds, and backed by a frenetic dance hall soundtrack, *Babylon* challenges the stereotypes held about young black men that were rife in the '60s and, come on, still resurface today. *Nicholas Quilty*



## Gunnin' For Adam Yauch

WORDS BY CHLOE McCLOSKEY

Music serves a major purpose in *Gunnin' For That HI Spot*, Adam Yauch's deceptively brief 11-half-documentary, released on DVD on November 17. But a hip-hop head might question his picks — Jay-Z's "Get Off Your Shoulder," House of Pain's "Jump Around." Aren't they a bit puppy for someone who shaped the genre in its early days as the Beastie Boys? MCA? "I don't really think of the choices as puppy," he says over email from central London. "Because I think puppy would be much more harmonious, like... Will Smith record."

"Some of those songs are just audience to us," he continues. "They fit like New York mechanics, and New York was a big character in the film. They made those songs feel big. This record like a letter家家 that's going to be understood."

*Gunnin'* also features Bobbito Garcia, the Puerto Rican hip-hop personality, coming running on the phone. Who Yauch knew that Bobbito's trash talk would feature a hokey? "I kinda felt like," he says. "We made sure we were recording Bobbito during the game. One of the things we did was make sure we had microphones up all over the place. The reason it was recorded that way was, with so many things going on in the shot, we needed to capture different voices."

With Oscilloscope (Yauch's production/distribution/music company) behind the project and lots of friends involved, it appears that he had a grand old time. "It was fun, but I find I wind up doing these projects lonely where I've been shooting stuff that leaves a lot of options open which means a lot more work in post-production." It's a tough life, but, hey, it pays.





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### TIGREMO: A FILM THAT WAS NEVER MADE (1994)

DIR: MIKA KAUHRISMAKI

AVAILABLE: NOVEMBER 17

Personal whiz-kid kapo Jari Jämsä flies to rural Brazil with Mika Kaurismäki and ageing, cigar-chomping producer Sam Fuller to find out why Fuller's puzzle opus, *Tigremo* (uncommissioned by Gary Nardino in 1954) was never made. After a brief stop to film a scene, the gang bring it to the village he took *Tigremo's* location from back with him. Fuller shows it to the modest, shy Kanza Indians, who delight at reviving their relations with screen Jämsä, particularly as told in Rauschenfrei and sketch form. This heartfelt interview work class. Sadly, we are thoughts about subtleties, so much of their history remains a mystery, making the whole down-to-earth idea of a state of ruse. *George Miller*

### A SECRET (2007)

DIR: CLAUDE MILLER

AVAILABLE: NOW

A Secret, adapted from Philippe Grimbert's bestselling novel, caused a bit of a stir in its native France upon release. Nominated for 11 Césars, it is an award-festively dourish affair spanning over half a century. The story follows Diving Bell and the Butterfly star and now blind vulture Matheus Andrade as he reconsiders his long-elderly father who has gone missing. As events turn sour, memories of childhood and family strife increasingly assault a backlog of loss and anti-Semitism. With a superb cast including Claude Dafrane, Patrick Bruel, Julie Dépardeur and Laurence Rémy, this is high-quality French fare indeed. *Graig Davis*

### THE LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT (1972)

DIR: WES CRAVEN

AVAILABLE: NOW

Craaven takes the seeds for future horror racers as a happy, idyllic setting interspersed with hyper sexuality and murder, and evolves between his father as a 'horror master' and past life as a humanistic professor. Cheap gags, Campervan-like performances, and an attempt at drama where all else goes together here, in a story loosely adapted from Edgar Allan Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher*. Interestingly creepy music may reveal an important lesson learned from this experience – don't let the lead actor record the entire soundtrack in your film, it produces the wrong kind of friggle. *James Atkinson*

### HISTOIRE(S) OU CINÉMA (1989)

DIR: JEAN-LUC GODARD

AVAILABLE: NOW

If you consider this collection of DVD+ featuring an informative documentary about the history of cinema, then you may be in for something of a surprise. Offering eight episodes, made over a period of 10 years, it is a sensory explosion that flickers between art, music, moving image, text and audio, ranging across a wealth of cultural references with little narrative direction. Despite being an aesthetic documentary that 'is the only way to make history', Godard uses a post-modern sense of ideas, styles and sounds to convey a pluralism, but at times unresolvable, vision of film. One for the futurists. *Nell Freudenreich*





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### TEETH (2007)

DIR: MITCHELL LICHENSTEIN

AVAILABLE: NOW

Ray Lichtenstein's son has discovered the family's loss - and to shut off the surprisingly-sustained thrill of his career myth of 'virginal devotion' (as virgin with teeth) for his first feature film. *Ginger Snaps* (1999), *Burn Heretic* an act of potency and cutting-of-age matrilineal, and *Clusterf\*\*k* (2002) as the adolescent king of virgin comedy, however, 20th century film auteurs toyed with an even more titillating and fun dip are toyed with in varied ways, while many worthy targets are skewered through the killing thematic device - notably the puritanical culture of America, and an increasing aggression in the goals of censorship. Gish, and it comes with X-ray packaging. *Shady* James Mervin

### DONKEY PUNCH (2008)

DIR: DILLY BLACKBURN

AVAILABLE: NOVEMBER 10

Dilly Blackburn's debut feature uncovers both a sexual and spiritual sexual massacre, the execution of which results in the death of a mother's love, one of a gaggle of sex-drunk sexual victims who have the misfortune to have been picked up by a charmless, and sexually masterless, pale delivery man. As though the sexual deviancy of blood has been filtered through the mind of a Premiership footballer, the film deteriorates from cheap-looking inflation to an overlong and poorly executed thriller, whose wretchedly convincing (aliquot) inexplicably messages to give away every twist and turn of the narrative. *Engaged* Marshall

### THE HAPPENING (2008)

DIR: M NIGHT SHYAMALAN

AVAILABLE: NOVEMBER 3

Opening with a namely Hitchcockian title sequence, *The Happening* is like *The Birds* (1963), concerned with a man (Dakota Johnson) and a woman (Kerry Bishe) trying to negotiate their relationship against the backdrop of an imminent catastrophic event. To tackle the botching psychosocial MacGuffin of Shyamalan's side, Shyamalan's deadly serious earnestness is as altogether more straightforward manifestation of the principle of nature's revenge, reflecting and conjuring preoccupation about environmental degradation and humanity's self-destructive drives. The apocalyptic that unfolds is curiously cryptic, but Shyamalan never gives us to care much about either its victim or its survivors. Perhaps that is the whole point. *Asleep* Bill

### ERASERHEAD (1977)

DIR: DAVID LYNCH

AVAILABLE: NOW

Lynch's feature debut gets a very personal spring clean in this new release. Lynch himself has previously restored and re-mastered the film with a new transfer. Thankfully, despite its moves towards modern production techniques, *Eraserhead* remains its gloriously clunky old self. Lynch regular Jack Nance stars as Library Supervisor, a young man with big hair channelling, it is a backwater industrial town. When his girlfriend, Mary X, goes birth to a firmly illegitimate child, events unravel with a raw, dry, deadistic tone on tone as the circus of surreal takes hold. This is Lynch at his most cerebral here - both visually stark and artistically pernicious. *Dark* Devere



**THE SHORT FILMS OF DAVID LYNCH (1987 - 1995)****DIR: DAVID LYNCH****AVAILABLE: NOW**

This has 50+ shorts, *See You Later, Ark* (1987) and *Alphabeat* (1990) – both undertaken by Lynch while still at art college – look like video collages, but the end one here is *The Grandmaster* (1993), which follows a boy who grows a ponytail in protest against his parents. This is followed by the wistfully indulgent *The Disposals* (1991). It all wraps up nicely with *The Century and the Broadcast* (1990) and the superbly kind *Land of the Free* (1992) – made using the original *Eraserhead* cinematography. A practically offbeat association that requires the lucid dreams of Lynch and his short, making you long *Driver*.

**BLACK GOD, WHITE DEVIL (1964)****DIR: GLAUBER ROCHA****AVAILABLE: NOVEMBER 3**

A classic of Brazilian "Cinema Novo" – a breakoff of "Third Cinema", which sought to establish a new identity for Latin American politics via film – this is reported searching for film audiences, but a riotously popular fable for the masses. Indeed, legendary lysine superstar from Brazil described Rocha's audacious piece as being filled with "average country", and Brazil was a guy who invented an antibiotic with some serious shoulder. As unusual yes, but especially No, *Magiskin* (over 100 minutes, it took 10 times longer, and though it influenced Sergio Leone's *Once Upon a Time in the West*, *Wings of Desire* is spurious).

**ADULTHOOD (2009)****DIR: NOEL CLARKE****AVAILABLE: NOW**

Following on from 2006's *Knifethroat*, Noel Clarke returns in the role of Tom, a west Londoner recently released from jail after serving ten years for the murder of a local girl, Tali. The story follows a traumatised Tom as he travels the streets of London looking to make amends with Tali's revenge-seeking family. While the film's frequent sex, violence and drug references are unoriginal and do little to develop the story, *Adulthood* does have more substance than its predecessor. Clarke delivers the harsh reality of real life in the capital, juxtaposed with the positivity of forgiveness and humanity. A necessary step. *Ray Finch*

**NEVER APOLOGIZE (2007)****DIR: MIKE E. KAPLAN****AVAILABLE: NOW**

This lecture by Malcolm McDowell on his close friend Lindsay Anderson, the director who put him in the wonderful *If...* (1968), needs thanks to McDowell's skill as an orator. His energy fills many of the more sombre moments (Anderson spent an awful lot of time telling people to fuck off) and conveys Anderson's love for the amateur world of film like McDowell describes how the director developed a vocabulary to describe the work he adored or despised (there was never any middle ground). In Anderson's own words, *Never Apologize me!* "Man! (in Latin, anything that was "unconventional or outside") but it's not 'Goya' ('Moyenne', 'important and good') either. *Alamy Images*

**WILD COMBINATION:**  
**A PORTRAIT OF ARTHUR**  
**RUSSELL (2008)**  
**DIR: MATT WOLF**  
**AVAILABLE: NOVEMBER 3**

*Wild Combination: A Portrait of Arthur Russell* presents a comprehensive look at the life and works of an experimental cultie whose life, like so many gay men living in New York in the 1970s, was tragically and briefly cut short by AIDS.

Russell, who also produced a host of classic alternative albums in the late '70s and early '80s, has found a cult following after his death, and his posthumous influence continues to resurface, from LCD Soundsystem and the *Queer Eye* cast to the *House of Cards* finale.

Director Matt Wolf, who cut his teeth with an experimental biopic of the queer artist and activist David Wojnarowicz but makes his feature debut here, intersperses his footage of Russell's performances with commentary from many of his collaborators, including avant-garde composer Philip Glass and best-pal Allen Ginsberg, as well as Russell's parents and long-term partner, Tom Lee.

Dressing up in small-town Ohio, Russell, a quiet and introspective teenager, seems to move in stone and drapery. An odd work for parents' visiting commentator, he arrives to find Ginsberg at the height of the happy scene, posing a Buddhist ascetic and pronouncing the ultimate state of folk, pop, rock and beatngton vocal that one to dominate his short life's numerous musical ranges.

However, it was off-screen to New York in the mid-'70s that Russell found commercial success, producing chart-album anthems, firing up the dance floors of legendary clubs like the Loft and the Gallery, and collaborating with Françoise E. Latry, Lenny and David Byrne.

Wolf, focusing largely on Russell's more experimental output, reveals his uncompromised and idiosyncratic predilections: difficult to work with and prone to non sequitur, but also a maniacally single-minded to his art and to making beautiful music readily acknowledged as of its time. But while Françoise Latry believed that his music was destined to find a larger audience, it was not to be—at least in his lifetime.

*Wild Combination: A Portrait of Arthur Russell*, his remarkable story, is released on November 3. For a streaming life, an accompanying companion of his previously unreleased music, is available on Rough Trade Records via *Melodic Quicksilver*.



**HIGH SCHOOL YEARBOOK**  
**(1984 – 1985)**

**DIR: JOHN HUGHES**  
**AVAILABLE: NOW**

From wedges and magenta day-long durations and quiddities in the locker, *Homecoming* (aka *High School Yearbook*) follows the adolescent form hell, from first to too young to remember the '80s, making High School Yearbook ... featuring Jason Gedrick (1984), *Wild Things* (1991) and *The Breakfast Club* (1985), goes down like the six John Hughes films before it. Sherman — so may you count as an alumnus.

Book or 1984, Jason Gedrick launched both the name 'the band' (as group members' boy), according to *High School Yearbook* as well as Michael Anthony Hall and Kelly Kapowski's names. But if you're expecting a wet hat of a chick flick — the bring-about-a-love-story squirm (Kapowski) complicated by her big sister's wedding — just like plausibly supposed. It still has the power to shock. In the opening credits, we see Kapowski's kid brother tell his father that log on his got her pregnant, which should make us ask: is this pregnancy, baby? And then Kapowski finds out that her whole family thought her fucking! without birth control. This is not how fans have seen her since ... it's difficult to see Hughes defined it. And though it only plausibly enough ... and it's the wonder, most right-leaning of the bunch (as in maintaining portions of an exchange student, and a dog at birth control pills) — the girl gets gay one-pony amateur adolescent chaste.

Whack of the tree is *Wild Things*, Hall, who burst out Kapowski rose emboldening digress *Jason Gedrick*, is again fully with the latter. But luckily, he progresses his path of exposure PC to produce a forth-and-blown, like, Kelly Lehrbach, dressed in one short reveal high-legged stockings. Her caring, older-teen-like presence helps him over home Highschool orientation meetings — working, including efficiency, but a solid home life.

None of Hughes' characters have happy home lives, and nowhere is this more acutely than in *The Breakfast Club* (1985), which drops a quick, proto-queer, frank, geek and bellringer into the main bonding dimension. With no escape, they live up to their own judgment, moving towards growth up to be like their parents.

Through this we can doubt well to the next day, *High School Yearbook* includes two other entries showing Hughes' film, coming as more beyond himself and continue his cultural impact. But if that's not your bag, put key Chicago Beagle's iconic track, "Wild Things," and be done with it. Googleable.

## KOS77

**KILLER OF SHEEP (1995)**  
**MY BROTHER'S WEDDING (1993)**  
**DIR: CHARLES BURNETT**  
**AVAILABLE: NOW**

For the first time this year, a good, but often bleak and witty, 70s film stock, with endearing music played all over it, seems to have found its niche. Each track, this elegant and death-coveted space, make shepherds look like a sensible art form. Similarly, lonely kids crying at playtime isn't traditionally a thing of beauty, but as pure one of Charles Burnett's vagueness of contemporary life in his *Killer of Sheep*, it's pure poetry.

But Burnett, apparently considered one of America's greatest film makers, is only now getting his first UK DVD release for his masterpiece. Luckily, the BFI is trying hard to make up for lost time, packing it with extras including a director commentary and interviews, new early shorts and an info-packed booklet. Burnett's full catalog, more links, and perhaps more accessible film, *My Brother's Wedding*, is also being released with similar extras.

Back to *Killer* of two ordinary men fed up with their lot – a working class grime of Burnett's mining ground, the black blues of *Whar', California* and, while *Killer of Sheep* – about an unnameable sheepherder who works – is his career, non-judgmental documentary, his 1983 film is a little angrier.

Kept out in the minespace where dust makes up the horizon, Burnett's stock today, Puerto Rican salsa, works in his parents' laundry shop, Burnett has unchristian, he never had the get-go that left his older brother to sweep the glasses floor the bar as a result. Puerto comes for his brother and his brother's friends – both black lop-eys. In which the unexpected found of his critically maligned and usually characterless best friend, Soduku, clashes with their long-awaited wedding day; let's work between family and friends, blood and policies. Neither film offers a resolution, Burnett roughly shores it like it is, rough. George Kirby

## SR72

**WILDER RUMMING (1972)**  
**DIR: DOUGLAS TRUMBULL**  
**AVAILABLE: NOW**

Three years before the moon landing and the environmentalism that began to emerge in the late 1960s, *Wilder Rummaging* charts the poetry of the American frontier space frontier, Valley Forge. The Trumbull uses a fleet of eight giant kites despatched from monk with the last vestiges of plant life from a dead planet emerged by industrialisation.

As the crew wait for their cargo to be loaded as well as re-establish a second life, they receive an instruction to abandon their plant bases, an order directly delivered by historian Freeman Lowell, who oversees his crewmates and charts a course and a sleepover.

First-time director Douglas Trumbull had worked previously in special effects supervisor on *2001*, and that experience clearly is back in the material grace of his own film, and through its visual effects, which make good use of matte-plate film and a model budget. The themes of the film have proven remarkably prescient, with Lowell (James Woods), encapsulating the modern corporate movement in his objections of processed foods and pesticides, and his misgivings of those industrial farming methods as a suspicion of corporate consciousness.

*Robert Rummaging* was one of only a handful of films scored by Peter Gabriel, obviously Trumbull for his background in folk music, and who made use of these connections to programme James Brown to contribute two songs to the soundtrack, including 'Joyce in the Rain' and the unlikely rock track, whose lyrics have been read by many as a resistance against Jim Crow's terrorism and racism.

The studio had initially hoped that *Blade Runner* would generate a hit on the back of its previous top 10 success, but a budget-driven two-page presskit for the film to release another two weeks early, and both score and film fell into audience obscurity. A resurgence of interest in folk music years has resulted in the soundtrack being soon released on CD, while vinyl copies of Deacon's original release continue to change hands for £50 or more. Both film and score can't highly recommended. Kingsley Moredell



25mg

above  
killer of sheep

# ex-rent hell

## hanky panky (1982)

by adam lee davies

HP82

DIRECTOR  
SIDNEY POITIER

STARRING  
GENE WILDER, GOLDA MEIR,  
RICHARD WIDMARK

BOX OFFICES  
SMITHSONIAN

CAGLINE  
WHEN YOU'RE WANTED FOR A  
MURDER YOU DIDN'T COMMIT,  
CHASED FOR SECRETS YOU DIDN'T  
STEAL AND RUNNING FROM PEOPLE  
WHO WANT TO KILL YOU, THEN BLAH  
FUCKING BLAH FUCKING BLAH... .

TRAILERS  
THE AYATOLAH OF PERACOLA,  
ROOF PARTY, THE LAST LAFFERTY,  
BUBBLING UNDER

CHEWYPICK  
THAT'S HOW YOU MAKE  
A MALTESE CROSS?

With producer Sidney Poitier's strings-marched Joseph Lhota's *Maltese Cross* nixed, back in the silver screen in 1970, he effectively closed the 16-dyslexic doors of perception that had been opening like a blossoming rosebud; for most of the previous decade. With the help of director Mike Nichols, he photized human skin, keeping chick kids and itches-to-fuckin' Menz-Wendy-poo out of their college dormitories, and fringed their bloused-out chinos down the bone, here's another roll-the-bus - *WHL*. Specifically, the Maltese-cross theories of World War II, where your friend was your enemy, your

enemy your only hope, and every action of harm was to be cliché'd down the gash and used to stick you stink to the nose cone of a Tomahawk starship. Steven Spielberg's *E.T.* was what made the soft-sounding outer-bounding a cause over a buckshot of the human condition.

In terms of audience alienation, however, even that unapologetic hotchpotch of *malicious* hubris was to prove a mere shadow of *excessive* comparison to the *dreaded* dimension of confusion that would undercut Richard's home 1982 follow-up *Hanky Panky*.

Richard's *Hanky Panky* Gross: Wilder gives birth a pillow-top toddler of a performance as a scatterbrained polymath and yuppie free-thinker Mackie Bloody in this once-cultured *Maltese* (but of a film which wasn't of that), after a sulfurous '70s Gene who begins his descent into the out-of-sight, Richard Feynman-on-interning, treasury department thinks work which he was to set out the year prior. Despite this, his war steadily in our grasp through 90 minutes of Mackie-licey screwball shenanigans in a known new space; for this Happy Totem of the mismatched capers - safe yet biting suspense, it is not long, though, before we're left stranded in the craggy ledges of yet another *maltese* gathering with all the comic potential of kernel surgery.

Snapping gingerly later a part originally conceived for Bryce Courtenay (a late date was made "available" for 60 to 90 days), dimwitted *Marty*-like widower Olden Walker sketches bizarre expression with Kurt Boddy's *Funkhouse*. The former part of a *One Flew* front ping, Boddy's estate reasonably approaches her kickably irreverent role with all the crack of Irish Night at the deli. Remastered

to accompany the Wideman across the country purrised by comedy great Richard Widmark's toro appearance, she is awarded through the blue bloom of a spatchcocked matador conserving the *hankie* and/or summary of man's mailing corporate tapes or top-secret documents, or a circle to the air or High Blood or just, *Any Way To Make It, All Stop*.

Double entendre (woman's masturbation) pile-up, shaggin' (out of either fibs) are exploded and tables are turned (the negative flipper) in a palpably desperate attempt to somehow distinguish *RP* from O'neal's *Maltese*-ish, but - like a snarly dressed-as-happy-go-lucky college - it's just too little and it's far too late. By the time O'neal finally reaches *guitar* and Widmark joins the *big Agency* in the sky, you'll be missing blood on your FBI dot dot blabbing that there must surely be a better way than that.

"Circle 21 did not exist, he was positive of that, but it was the difference. When she came to me that everyone thought it existed, and that was made up," concludes Boddy's *Maltese* Yessaman as a crook of comic recognition that could tell us was easily applied to the living of the *RP* log entry. Night after overdrunk night we tested files we didn't know to see made by people who simply couldn't have known what they were doing - but yet who amongst us has time to have any point quantum and the usurping nature of the Regressor's *new world*? No, we willingly posed up and in doing so forfeited another pound from our wrists, writing rods. They didn't even have to get those hands dirty - we dug it out ourselves. And that, surely indeed, is much, much worse.

75mg

# GENRE SPECIFIC THE BRITS IN SPACE GENRE

JOHN WILLOUGHBY MOON

In the days of back-room boffins like Frank Whittle, *primal* science-fiction inventors of the jet engine, the idea that the Russians or, God forbid, the ruddy Americans, might become the dominant power as space exploration was just an alarming spectre. Yet, the Yanks and Ivan had lagged the best Nazi ergophiles while Bomberbarian Chery tried to reach the German rocket base. Britain had wit, vigour and good humour in spades, and if that failed, there were the countless subgroups of people of the species whose oil and war material wealth could be extracted at the drop of a pitch helmet. For a brief time, even the British film industry had faith in a slightly musing the more, where the infinite sand-smuggling inventors would be no match to floggs your P and Qs.

Maintaining democracy in the face

of even Q audacity was natural to the Victorian house builders in 1967's *The First Men In The Moon*. Co-adapted from H.G. Wells by British SF kingpin Nigel Kneale, the film adapts the adventures of Joseph Conrad (Laurence Olivier), the bookish gook a short inventor of, alas, 'anti-gravity man'. In wretched and left miraculously unexplained, the power is that it allows Conrad to spring shock-leaved in consciousness as he thrusts free of gravity in a ship seemingly shielded from the rigours of spacelight by a far-wellur visor. Conceded within this audience of experts in America's showy vaudeville, Conrad and his partner, Bedford, float five-madey Goliathine bags, umbrellas and iron rods. They are accompanied by Bedford's fiancée, a character uninterested in silly radio ramblings that a mere only

moon-pilot might seem to be worthy. It was a point raised by NASA, who in early Gamma missions aimed on a dozen Miami Beach keepers on every payload, less a contingent of erotica than erotica in the hold.

The most endearing image from *First Men...* is the discovery by a group of UK scientists of a Union Jack floating limply on the house surface, announcing that Britain had been First. To underline it in 1968, it was a moment of quiet pride as a series of their vanishing empire came up against the harsh New World Order.

There are as such quibbles about involving plenty foreigners as Harry Anderson's one-spicy 1999 muckstick farcey *To The Far Side of the Sun* (aka *Doppelgänger*), just so long as it's made abundantly clear that Englaterrans are in charge. But despite

FQE

Carey-Clough Quantum Enterprise

## WORDS BY

those counter-response effects acting entirely on hostile societies and the phrases 'Friend nor' and 'Can't help you, old man', there were no family connections there. This is the future made flesh in a 1969 Picardian thriller, where mission control is run by kindly, bowed, enlightened daddies and all humans are man, plucky and preferably young. That top secret of post-Pearl-Harbor Britain is the platform for picking off the Tunis (double dealing) and the French (affectionate humanism) in a bizarre anti-reality where global space agency Euroflic is run entirely by jowly British pedants to whom Nakk and 'the Russians' are just laughable themselves for a piece of fiction.

The fictional representations of both these films are therefore also unforgiving, reflected by what is, without doubt, the most

scarcely cited on 'what might have been' of Britain had pursued the rocket dreams of the back-room boys. Richard Lester directed *The Man on the Moon* (1965), the sequel to 1959's *The Moon That Broke*, without Peter Sellers but with enough regional eloquence to convincingly portray any British space programme as the fornicating offspring of corruption, self-interest and emanating ingenuity. He re-imagine plucky Britain as the Duchy of Grand Penwick, a (united) loose bunch of renegades as a world buffeted by the fluctuation of Cold War power – just as the nation was itself in the early 1960s. Financial and from first the US and then the Soviet Union is only secured when the Dudley overcomes the superpowers that their space programme is ready to roll. In fact, the end is to repair the planet long on

Margaret Rutherford's muddling out in her bureaucratic megastore where the moon rocker is, indeed, consigned.

As a satire on Britain's much-reduced status on the global stage, *Broad* is lighter-than-air. But, like Gilligan's buccaneering and Byorge's feminist state in *Sexual*, *The Moon on the Moon* cuts into the core spirit of Britishic endeavour – where, in the face of American can-do dynamism and Soviet mere plucky rock-pix, little Britain punches over its substance, uniformly malleable targets of progress: the Cleverous Korus.

For also:

*The Quatermass Experiment* (Uta Quast, 1955)  
*A Brief Day Out* (Nick Park, 1985)  
*Smashie* (Dame Boyle, 2007)

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5

## CHAPTER SIX

DON'T BELIEVE THE HYPE  
INCOMING MOVIES  
LAID BARE

## Alice in Wonderland.

Dr Tim Burton

**NEW** Come hell or high water, a new Tim Burton outing will always be worth a look. *Sweeney Todd* and *Chocolate Factory* had detractors and fans in equal measure, so it'll be interesting to see how the director handles *Alice in Wonderland* – arguably the most revered source material of his career to date. In the end, though, the underlying darkness and mischievous nature of Lewis Carroll's classic could be a perfect fit for Burton: on the other, there's always a risk that his unmistakable style will compromise the book's imagery, rather than complement it. Then there's the cast: Johnny Depp will feature, making him apparently Hugh Laurie as well as playing Twinkie and Tweedledee. If that turns out to be a good idea, we'll make one and have **EET March 2010**.

## Revolutionary Road.

Dr Sam Mendes

Two books underlined the disintegrating dynamics of "ordinary" people, but as well as the disaster, the time is ripe for *Revolutionary Road*. Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio will return to play a Communist family who dream of raising above the social strata they live in, but who are ultimately doomed to fail. In 1975, Richard Yates' description has acquired new life as being a response to the "faded, dispiriting clinging to safety and security at any price, so complicated in the Eisenhower administration and the Joe McCarthy witch-hunts." As we continue to regress into reductive and destructive ideologies today, *Revolutionary Road* could make a welcome impact. **EET January 2010**

## The Shock Doctrine.

Dr Michael Weinstein

**NEW** In *Accidental Revolution*, David Held is an intellectual Rip-Sawyer who crusades corporate greed with capitalism's systemic evil. In its normal talk, the shock doctrine, Klein's study of disaster capitalism and the way in which the world has been hijacked by a neo-liberal elite, is a powerful polemic for our times – a book that lifts the veil of history and allows us to see such a pressing clarity. James and Alfonso Cuarón cleverly thought so, when they adapted the story for a short that played at TIFF '07. But now Michael Winterbottom is to give it the proper documentary treatment. It's a perfect marriage of man and material, given Michael's own history of morally conscious filmmaking. With the series for *Horrible Histories* and the release soon, anti-globalisation has clearly got some game right now. **EET Late 2009**

## White Jazz.

Dr Joe Germano

**REVIVAL** Even since *Stargate* rechristened the eye-drain, science fiction has been facing round about an adoption of the "sequel". *White Jazz* does nothing like *Coriolanus* in sincerely thowing in the hot seat, but what about the action? Will Guy Pearce return as Dr. Li Edgley? Well, actually, we asked that last time in update, and that is what he had to say: "I don't know if that's actually happening or not. My agent said to me it was [being] revised, but I think it will, 'Well, well, we'll see', because it would purely depend on who was doing it. If Curtis Hanson was going to do the sequel I'd consider it, but I don't hold a huge amount of interest in pursuing it for the sake of it." Bottom line: don't hold your breath! **EET Late 2009**



# Shutter Island.

By Martin Scorsese

These days, Scorsese seems to be exclusively seeking films with either crackly old rock stars or tormented European, and the recent results have been a mixed bag. This effort features The Cooper (Tom Hanks) playing up Marshall Edward Daniels, drafted in to investigate the disappearance of a malefactor who'd been taken to a hospital for the criminally insane. To add to the perils, an approaching hurricane begins to stir up the emotions and makes tracking the animal impossible given how quickly thus will winds, we wouldn't be surprised if the animal also houses an escaped murderer or two. On the plus side, the story actually comes from a novel by Dennis Lehane (*Mystic River*, *Given*, *End of Watch*) while the supporting cast includes Mark Ruffalo, Ben Kingsley and the superb Matt Damon. Hanks is good, but... **ETB** October 2009

# Milk.

By Dan Kois

Mark Wahlberg appears to be returning to something like a cinematic style with this biopic of Harvey Milk, who in 1977 became the first openly gay man to be elected to public office in the US, only to be mortally assassinated. All the same, the unconvincing production and wholly odd framing in the first trailer suggest that this will rank as unfairly interesting but even discomfiting. Considering that among his early influences were Stony Perin, Josh Brolin, George Clooney — and a wacky homo, that could address most of the lack of characterisation in Tom Stoppard's experimental work (*Land of Plenty*), while not entirely accounting for the giddy elation that has mainstream features (including Paranormal). **ETB** March 2009

# Antichrist.

By Lars von Trier

There's an exciting prospect: Lars von Trier, director, lover of improbable filmaking challenges and all-round crazy genius, has just told us *EXACTLY* what his next movie will be: *Antichrist*. The plot concerns a couple who retreat to a cabin in the woods to get over the death of their son, only to find themselves victims of malevolent forces. The film also purports the theory that it was Satan, not God, who created the world. We know how good von Trier is at controversy (*The Idiots*), we know how much he likes to play with and subvert genre (*Dancer in the Dark*), and we know his likes can compete with the best out there (parallel). This sounds just bad enough to work. **ETB** June 2009

# King Shot.

By Alejandro Jodorowsky

This is big. No, seriously, this is big. Bigger than big. This is huge. Massive. Gigantic. Monstrous. Filmmaker, director, producer, composer, actor, star, comic book writer, theater director, Surrealist, psychologist, hero, legend, revolution and cultic figurehead Alejandro Jodorowsky is back in the limelight again. King shot as his "metaphysical spaghetti western film" and as a master in the craft, where a group of problems (Dale Arden, Kirk Wise, Melvyn Hayes) should assess the enormous body of a Cheech-Like figure buried in the sand. That's about all we know right now, but there's more shocking moments and stunning surreal ones where geek love unites the souls of Jodorowsky's rebellion and aspiration as set to be. And we even slightly remember that the kid has no fun taking these years to and at the end towards the Robert W. Tully as epochal people start getting excited. **ETB** June 2009





## The Brothers Bloom. BY KATE JAMES

Incredibly, some people didn't like it. Darren Aronofsky's debut, *Bloody, a pitch-blank near-thriller*, conquered the genre as high-stakes high school drama, complete with an overblown sexual angle and unpredictable plotline. In rewatching, it's weird to see his second feature, the mismatched *Moon*, a good old fashioned sci-fi movie that somehow earned some of last year's most giddy buzzwords with a cast full of beautiful movie stars. Adrien Brody won *RocknRolla* and the title role, stringing up a toroed business tycoon (Michael Stuhlbarg) for 'the last job'—book, right word in, shot as a far more successful showing from Johnson than nevertheless is trusting with ideas, not will, of their successfu... The real show may yet prove to be Kristen Bell, who is used to her own kind of success... A measure of her commitment to the role may be found in the fact that she apparently learned to play the piano, violin and banjo, as well as winterizing the dark art of breakdancing to ensure that she excelled. **THE** Early 2010

## The Tree of Life. BY TERESA MATHIS

Proof that Darren Aronofsky's *The Fountain* was, in fact, a work of unrepentant generic overkill in the guise of *BEAT PAIN*. Or, really did he just judge Aronofsky's brilliance — unfathomably looking on the prospect more seriously before shooting began — that he'd come crawling back to the theme in Theodore Malick's *The Tree of Life*. Shaking off the 'Memento' period piece that focuses on a man to find the legendary wellspring of life, inspired by 'a love of innocence' (that old chestnut), was originally supposed to start in today in 2006. A change in financing snarled those plans, and also put paid to the involvement of original, leading man COLIN FARRELL. But at all worked out — kinetic retelling in Malick's favored northern American landscapes, and the movie as new as the sun. He may be one of those narrative directors — with as many people reading the new *Malick* just another page of retrospective reading as a meditative masterpiece — but the fact remains that a new Malick is always an event to be watched. **THE** End 2010



## LWLies hangs with the undead on the set of new British 'zom-com', *Tormented*.

"Can you see my face?" is the question Lauren Wilson asks before risking a gory-eyed movie for director Joe Wright's first feature. She looks blankly overphotographed film *Tormented*, and it's easy to see why. Despite playing a character apparently gone out of puberty, "Miaulable" is one of the resident zombies at the secondary school-set Rock and she looks the part by sporting a pair of conking-green heels and a skirt so short no sheet of toilet paper behind her thighs are clearly visible.

Then again, with six banjos and three guitars it'd be wrong to expect anything other than high-school horror stereotypes being shamelessly turned on their head in the name of comedy and ridiculousness. But despite playing the verdiest set pieces and most eerie zombie, there's a more somber element to *Tormented*, as the one doing the snickering is a boy back from the dead who was so horrifically bullied he took his own life. It's a talking point that will no doubt follow the film through to its release, but actress April Pearson (she's known as "Shane" Michelle) is clear about the bio's stance on bullying: "We're not making a mockery of bullying; it's an issue and it's not being presented or undermined," she promises.

## Micmacs à Tire-Larigot. By Jean-Pierre Jeunet

After reportedly pulling out of the adaptation of half of us, this will now be the next work from Oscar-winner Jeunet. *Aliens* (Macabre) to Apollon in one week! the French director will this time try his hand at satirizing the global arms trade. Playing an currently underway, with saline interests suggesting the English water will be Dodgy Drudge by the dozen — which makes it sound like a bad SCIFI flick. Don't let that put you off though: Jeunet is collaborating with his usual screenwriter Guillaume Leterrier and star Bourvilégié Marion Cotillard. For what we're hoping will be a film that's as inventive and stylish as his previous movies. **EEB: Mid 2010**

## Mammoth. By Julian Medvedev

This will be the first English-language picture from Julian Medvedev, the merciful Zabdi who brought us the tender *Judging Amy* and the tooth-shattering *Edys*. A wee Medvedev's last two films neither passed as the bulk of his growing reputation, combining narrative in favour of experimental meanderings and generic fests of genital surgery. *Mammoth* should avoid a mere sophomore patchy in tragi-com that follows a US transvestite (Costa-Gavras) in Thailand, her kids and the family maid back home, and the mother-in-law in the Philippines. Given the director's political leanings, we're expecting something on the vein of *Zabdi* — look, let's hope he leaves out the bloody engine starts that time. **EEB: February 2010**

# Life During Wartime.

By Ted Sennett

The work of Todd Solondz may be an acquired taste, but the man himself certainly knows how to provoke an audience. His 1990 feature comedy,  *Happiness*, was so nasty an finding blood at the theater level — though thankfully it was also a hell of a lot funnier, skewering the miserable lives of three schoolteachers SUBJECT TO NEW JERSEY. A sequel of sorts, *Life During Wartime*, will resurrect characters from both that film and from 1995's *Palmetto* to the battlefield, though it's possible that multiple screeners will play the same characters, as in *Palmetto*. Paul "Wee Man" Kossoff is the only confirmed new & present, but Paul Dano, Hope Davis, Rosemarie, and Bruce Campbell are all rumored to be aboard. Filming was due to start in April, went to prison, so further details should arrive over THE late 1999.

# Me and Orson Welles.

By Richard Linklater

Linklater the shop-butter meekly again. Now, as the early '90s would have predicted, link by now the self-styled auteurist auteur would have his childhood's confusion, his preadolescent obsessions, a boy's Day-Glo whimsy & surprise nature under his belt. He looks set to pass off the coherent square puzzle pieces again with those like about a pre-Roman Cinema Welles putting on a Broadway production of Julius Caesar. While Linklater is usually able to pull off whatever he turns his hand to, this project has two potential liabilities: (1) the fact that this is only other pre-teen culture film, *The Newcomers*, was also his biggest failure, and (2) the inexplicable presence of high school *Mystic's* Sue Ellen. Still, Linklater has reportedly managed to land credibility to Ethan Hawke, so perhaps there's hope. EMM Sept 1999.

# The Boat That Rocked.

By Richard Gurney

Okay, we all know it's a Richard Curtis film. There's a very English tone, a "lively" but honest story, and a big smoky coat featuring one stellar newcomer (Philip Seymour Hoffman) and loads of much loved stars. But hang on a second, where's Hugh Grant? The Indian and potentially a saga of the changing times, that new offering from PR giant StudioCanal still stars Grant's former co-star, Melinda不清楚這句話。 Apparently, that time our oh-so-glamorous love story is broken. "The people" and "the women" set on Radio Rock, a '60s punk station on the North Sea, were looking as giddy girls always breaking the rules and sticking it to the man. Let's ignore our respect for a working soundtrack and visually reminiscent of Madonna & I, rather than Austin Powers. EMM May 1999.

# UNCOMING

Sometimes, history seems to have it in the canes, with potentially great projects falling by the wayside. Let's raise a glass to the films that get away.

# Dune (1975).

Supposed director Alejandro Jodorowsky

An over-hyped rock-and-film cult classic, David Lynch's adaptation of George Herkner's *Dune* (1984) is not a very good film. However, you good, no. The whole mess is largely dismissed by followers of Lynch and Herkner alike. Yet there could have been an *ALIEN*-style, more than justly popular, if the legendary Alejandro Jodorowsky had way.

If all had gone to plan, the director of questionable nationality would have assembled an ensemble cast (no one, *Harrison*, as Paul Atreides, Rock dagger to take on Froy, while David Attilan would play the blotted Baron). Best of all, Salvador Dalí was called upon to play the imperious Harkonnen successor, over the humble artist, demanded at less than \$100,000 per hour. Jodorowsky consulted a set of tarot cards and elected to pay the man — but retained his shooting date to jinx him.

Even more impressive names were proposed as the featured casts of proceedings. Asako Imai (gratifying pink Floyd for the soundtrack, undoubtedly imagined *Madame Mao*) to design the film's look. With artifice — and a then-unknown writer by the name of Dan O'Bannon — would Leiber be recruited for Ridley Scott's *Alien*. The project would fail through in the late '70s, but certain believe that the storyboards, widely circulated around Hollywood, went on to influence *Star Wars*, *Raiders*, *Matrix* and many other films that followed.

Jodorowsky believes his vision was rejected for being too unconventional, and it's certainly not hard to see why. It's anyone's opinion as to what the final film would have looked like, but it's fair to say that it would have been radically different from Lynch's version — and indeed from Herkner's original novel. Jodorowsky admits that his script was very much his own invention, nor did he have any idea about the changes he made.

"Our didn't belong to Herkner just as Don Quixote didn't belong to Cervantes," he once wrote. "Orion didn't belong to Mark, like Robinson or John. There are many more Gospels called 'apocryphal', and there are as many lives of Christ as there are believers. Every one of us has their story of Jesus."

Stuttering words. It's just a shame that we will never see his.

**Chances of resurrection:** Odds-on you need the last sentence? No wall ever goes up. Hence...



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